

Temporal Arrangements

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Temporal Arrangements

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Summary

A strange object sends Solas and Iwyn Lavellan back in time, right into a situation neither can control. Raw and emotional from their recent breakup, they have to pretend to date to avoid raising suspicion, and work together to find a way back home.

Complete

Notes

Written for a tumblr trope prompt, fake dating + time travel.

See the end of the work for more [notes](#)

Chapter 1

Solas is up front, his back silent and broad. Iwyn halfway regrets her decision to bring him, but the notion is childish. He is the best choice for this mission. They need to investigate an overlooked item in Dirthamen's temple. A scout had found it, sketched it, and said they didn't want to touch it because it 'glowed angrily'. A wise choice, probably.

Now, the scout is leading Solas, Dorian, Cassandra and herself through the labyrinth of rooms to somewhere they had missed on their earlier visits. Cass had sent her sympathetic looks earlier, when they had made camp. Dorian had been talking the whole way, trying to cheer her up. She appreciated it, but she is thankful he is silent now. Him and Solas can look at the item, spend the whole afternoon discussing it, then they can go back. Hopefully it will be worth their time. Hopefully Dorian and Solas will not need longer than an afternoon.

"Here it is," the scout says a little later. They all crawl through the hidden door, and true enough, inside rests a strange object on a small pedestal. She agrees with the scout, it looks angry, all edges and an unsettling purple glow. She can smell the magic too, bitter like burnt mushrooms.

"Fascinating. I have not seen this kind of magic in a long time..." Solas takes a step forward and reaches for the object. The smell intensifies, and the magic grows. It is fast, or maybe she is slow. Dorian yells. Cassandra draws her sword. The violet tendrils reach for Solas, for his hand, twining up his arm. He flickers. He screams, or maybe she is the one screaming as she grabs him and tries to pull him back. Then the magic hits her, consumes her, but she doesn't let go.

When she finally can see again, when the pain in her arm has faded, she is not in the muck of the broken temple. She is in hallway, lying ungracefully on top of Solas. There is music somewhere and the air is cool. Above her, floating lamps cast a soft glow on the midnight blue drapes.

Solas' clothes are fine, silk and gold and soft furs. Nothing like the rough clothes he usually wears, and nothing like the armor she still wears. Water from the derelict temple is still seeping through her boots. Beneath her, Solas' chest is broad, solid and close. It feels like home, and it's the last thing she should think about. She scrambles to her feet, and Solas follows. His eyes dart everywhere, panic and a strange recognition in his gaze.

There is a murmur of voices and clinks of glasses and footfalls and the rustle of fabric from the doorway to the left. The sound of people, many of them. She keeps her voice low.

"Where are we? What happened?"

"I'm sorry – I must act quickly."

His magic washes over her, cool and clear and somewhat different than usual. Her armor disappears and she is dressed in an white gown, shimmering with golden lights. It clings to her upper body, split by a deep cut all the way down her stomach, and the skirt floats from her hips all the way to the floor. The material is softer than anything she knows. Her arms are covered in numerous golden bracelets. Thankfully, it almost feels like armor.

"Solas – what is going on?" She is not about to panic. It will do her no good.

"I need to... I don't know for sure... I think we are – "

An elf strides from the doorway towards them. He is short and compact, with deep brown skin and clad entirely in black. His hair hangs in thick twists from his head, each intricately woven with

gold.

“Lord Fen’Harel! I didn’t see you arrive. How long have you been hiding in the shadows?”

She must have misheard. Fen’Harel? But Solas replies without pause.

“How would you know?”

The man laughs – and she can’t tell if it is genuine or fake.

“I am afraid I have not yet made your acquaintance, my Lady.” He swoops in and grabs her hand, kissing it with an elegant bow. His fingers run questioningly over her palm. “A warrior? Are you here alone?”

“She is with me.” Solas pulls her close, his arm around her waist. She tries to ignore it’s the first time in weeks he has touched of his own volition. She has to keep her wits, and not notice how perfect his hand fits on her hip.

“Lady Iwyn, this is Lord June. Lord June, please meet Lady Iwyn.”

“A pleasure to meet you, Lady Iwyn. Let me know if the wolf’s challenges grow dull.”

June. Lord June. Fen’Harel.

She has to do something, not stand there and gape. What would Josephine do? An Orlesian curtsy are probably out, so she settles for a nod and a smile.

“As I am pleased to meet you, Lord June.”

June smiles broadly and turns to Solas. He talks about war or politics or both, and Solas confidently replies, smooth and even. He is at home here, though every answer is evasive.

“Let us re-join the party.” June moves towards the double doors where the music plays, and Solas follows. His hand slides from her waist and presents his arm for her to rest hers on. She has no choice but to do so. Where is she? What happened? Is this some sort of vision in the fade? Is this real? She remembers the elf’s – June’s - assessing gaze before Solas staked his claim, and she wonders what would have happened had she arrived here alone. Wherever ‘here’ may be.

They pass through the opulent golden doors. Magic swirls through the air, pressing against her, running through her. The spark she carries burst into flame. Inside, there are more people than she can count. Elves, all dressed in lavish garments embellished with precious stones or gold or silver or leather or fur.

She freezes, but Solas keeps moving, and she has to move with him so she doesn’t stumble. Her feet are bare, the only familiar thing other than Solas’ presence besides her. Except he is not familiar at all, no hint of the humble apostate. She is out of place, plain and small. She wishes her hair was done, instead of stuck in haphazard pony tail. She hopes she has no mud on her face.

They part with June, but soon another elf engages Solas in conversation. This time, she doesn’t recognize the name, thankfully, and after a similar simple introduction, she is left to observe again, the conversation involving topics and places she has never heard of.

She wishes she could pull Solas away, ask him where they are and what is going on, but every time they take a step, another person engage them in conversation. All she manages is a quick denial when she asks if this is the fade.

It is real, somehow. Real and overwhelming. It makes The Winter Palace look like a barn, the Orlesian Game feel like child's play. She can't tell how many questions Solas deflects with other questions, how many layers of vitriol is hidden beneath the niceties.

Free to observe, she looks at the people. She notices the servants – or slaves she supposes. It leaves a bitter taste in her mouth as she grabs an elegant glass of a tray. They are well but plainly clad, almost invisible shadows moving through the crowds, never looking her in her eyes. Vallaslin adorn their faces, the patterns varied and beautiful. No two alike. Something else the Dalish got wrong. It fills her with revulsion and curiosity. What do the different patterns mean? Do they all belong to different nobles?

She realizes it is a blessing she no longer has her vallaslin. It would look wrong here, stark tattoo rather than the pulsing, swirling magic of these, and she could hardly be believed as Solas' companion if she wore them.

The guests act and look like nobles. Some seem more important than others, but she doesn't understand the system. She barely understands Orlais, so she stops trying to guess.

Here is another person to talk to, another introduction made. They look at her briefly, but with no challenge. They are there to talk to Fen'Harel.

That is what they call him, again and again. Her mind screams. Unreal. Unreal. Unreal. But the music and the drinks and Solas arm around her doesn't feel like dream. It still feels different, like reality has no place here.

"We should dance," Solas says, when he has bid a tall woman good evening. Someone else is approaching, but Solas is already in motion. She nods and smiles, and tries to remember what Josephine told her. If you look the part, no one will question you.

At the dance floor, Solas leads and she follows. The dance is easy enough, a relief. It also brings him close. His body next to hers, his hips pressed against hers.

"Iwyn," he says, low in her ear when he gets the chance. "I must be brief. We have travelled back in time. I am sure much here is confusing."

"It is. Fen'Harel."

He winches. She almost regrets.

"I'm sorry. I will explain later. Please, do not offer anything to anybody. Do not say much about yourself, if you can. No one knows you, and they will rip you apart if they can, if only to elevate their own status. Be evasive."

She nods.

"I am truly sorry, this is the only way to prevent it, you must be seen as someone who holds my full interest. Not just... professionally."

His lips slide over her cheek, and it's a ghost, a figment from when she was enough for him.

"Anyone unclaimed, anyone suspected of being a free agent, or without much power, or from a minor house, is seen as target of manipulation, expected to pay fealty or be subjected to someone else's will. You must be seen as high enough status to be here on your own, and to be here with me."

The music stops and he presses a quick kiss to her mouth. She wants more, and she wants to scream, to claw at him, to tell him to go fuck himself. She smiles gently and devoted at him.

She notices the gold earrings and studs in his ear. Intricately, a chain connects a stud in his lower ear to ring at the tip. She wonders if he would moan if she tugged gently on the chain, and it is absurd, inappropriate. She should focus, heed his words, and she has no right to know. Not anymore. No matter how good his acting is.

“So sweet – how long will it last? Until the morning?”

“Sylaise.”

Solas voice is cold and they turn to face the intruder. A tall woman, with beige skin shimmering like a flawless topaz, and her dark hair a waterfall down her back. Her flowy green dress is covered with swirling whorls and flowers, constantly in motion. She can almost glimpse the pattern once tattooed upon her face.

“Fen’Harel. Are you not going to introduce me to your companion?”

“This is Lady Iwyn,” Solas says. “She graciously accepted to accompany me tonight.”

“It is my pleasure to meet you, Lady Iwyn.” Sylaise’s dark eyes seem to glow and it is equally menacing and reassuring. The intent is different than the cool disdain she has for Solas.

“Would you do me the pleasure of having this dance?”

Sylaise smiles, and Iwyn doesn’t know if she is expressing genuine interest or if it is some sort of powerplay in front of Solas. Solas’ grip on her loosens, and she hopes she reads him right when she nods and accept the dance.

The music swells again, intricate unfamiliar rhythms, and she follows the taller woman, hard and beautiful. It is easy to dance with her. Sylaise holds her gaze, the intensity boring into her. Iwyn hopes she can’t read her mind, and she tries to bring forth nothing but memories of the party, of the beauty and grace she admires in the creature of legend who sweeps her around the floor. The air burns Iwyn’s lungs, and she is glad Sylaise asks no questions.

The dance ends and Sylaise kisses her cheek.

“I do hope Fen’Harel doesn’t bore you. You are the most interesting thing he has dragged up for the past decade, I would hate to see you languish. Let me know anytime you want to ... dance.”

“I will keep that in mind, Lady Sylaise.” She hopes her voice is steady, and the words vague enough to not insult.

They are, thankfully, right in front of Solas, so she doesn’t have to navigate this treacherous ground alone, out of place and out of time. Solas has a peculiar look on his face, and it makes her realize that she is here on purpose, where Solas had to overhear Sylaise and her offer. He saunters to her, and extends his hand.

“I hope you have room for one more dance with me, my - lady?” He has never once called her my lady.

“Always,” she replies, and for her it is no act.

This time, when they dance, he holds her closer. She understands the dance now, but not the

desperate, sorrowful look in his eyes. His magic runs over her, pouring out of him, like he is filled to the brim with emotions he doesn't vocalize. She lets herself get carried by it, the floating lamps, the golden light, the polished floors and crystal windows. Unlike anything she has ever seen or felt. Solas' hands are firm on her, his desire burning hot and real in this magic palace of dreams. She forgets where they are and what they are and aren't, and enjoys his body a next to her.

He doesn't let go when the dance ends. They are close, their faces mere inches apart, his familiar features an ache in her chest. Her lips are parted, and she snaps them shut. She wants to kiss him again, but she dares not.

"We should be able to leave soon," he says.

"Good."

She doesn't want the charade to end, or maybe she does. She enjoys his closeness far too much. She has too many guesses and questions burning in her head.

After a few goodbyes, they leave through a large Eluvian placed in the lobby. Solas quickly hurries through the Crossroads, the landscape bending to his will. He is silent, and she does not interrupt. They pass through another Eluvian, howling wolves decorating the frame. Fen'Harel. Solas is Fen'Harel and she hasn't had time to dwell on it.

"Fen'Harel."

She blurts it out as soon as the mirror closes behind them, before she takes in the oval room the mirror is placed in, which looks identical from this side. Wolves, and wolves on the frescos – his frescos, covering the room, the walls, and the domed ceiling.

Solas' shoulders sag at her outburst, as if she ran a spear through his chest. He does not meet her eyes when he turns to her.

"I am sorry. I... we should go somewhere private to speak. I do not know how far news will travel and we better keep up the charade."

There are elves in the hallway beyond, curious glances quickly averted. Solas squares his shoulders and he grows taller, or broader, or simply more. Fen'harel.

She follows him through the doorway, where he puts his arm around her, and he leads her through hallways, light and airy and full of magic. He nods at the people – his servants, and he dismisses them with a wave of his hand.

They are finally alone when they arrive in a suite of rooms. The first has a sitting area and work desk strewn with papers and books, so familiar it hurts. She can glimpse a bedroom beyond the double doors.

"Please. I... we should be alone here. I am... I can't..." He looks hopeless, lost, and he sits on the couch, and he puts his heads in his hands. "I suppose you have questions."

She sits. She is next to him.

"Fen'harel? That was what you couldn't tell me."

"Yes. I... I wish..." he stalls, and he stares up at the corner of the room where the bookshelves meet the ceilings.

She lifts her hand, and she almost touches him. She lets it fall to her lap.

“Solas. Is that your real name? Or something you made up?” She needs to know. Who is this man next to her? The man who fought with her, who bled with her, who loved her.

“I was Solas first. Fen’Harel came later.”

“You’re a god.”

“No. There are no gods.” Resolutely he turns to her and explains. He tells of wars and deceit, of generals and leaders, of nobility and mage-kings. How later, they became revered as gods, but it was false. And it has not yet happened, but the seeds have been planted. June’s confidence and Sylaise’s haughtiness, and they both think themselves better than anyone else. How soon, Elgar’nán will declare himself a king, and a god.

She tries to understand. She fails. She knows he speaks the truth, but the truth is elusive yet.

“You couldn’t have explained this to me? You couldn’t trust me? I love you.”

“I wanted to. I... I am sorry. There are...” The words come haltingly, drawn from the depths. He collapses inwards and turns away.

“This isn’t all, is it?”

“No, there is more. Things that have not yet happened, though it is nigh inevitable. I have – I will soon... not soon, but.” He shakes his head.

It is too much. The music and the party like a dream or a nightmare. The magic. The revelations and questions, the anguish that should be hers and not his. Her soul and her bones are tired, worn thin.

“Solas. Can I call you Solas still?”

“I prefer it.”

“Solas. It is late. We have travelled through time. Whatever else is there, let’s talk about it tomorrow.”

“Tomorrow. Yes, you are right.”

Whatever else he has to say can wait. His secrets make him withdraw inside his own misery. She loves him. She can’t bear to see his pain. She knows now that he cares about her, more than she thought. She wants to take his hurt away. He is afraid, and she wants him to be bold. She wants him to let her love him. She rubs her hand over his back, gently, like she is soothing a frightened halla.

The tenseness leaves him as he accepts her caress, her caring. They sit, her hand on his back, stalled as the ever-present magic dances around them.

“The bedroom is through there,” Solas finally says. “You can... please take the bed. I can sleep here. I wouldn’t... I’m... It is best if we keep the cover story. I have – I had – plenty of guest rooms, but...”

She gets up and she peers into the room, revealing the biggest bed she has ever seen. She laughs.

“Solas. Don’t be ridiculous. We can both sleep comfortably, easily. I don’t think I have ever seen

such a big bed.”

He shrugs.

“Come to bed. Rest. Let us talk more in the morning. It’s not as if we haven’t shared a bed before.” She notices the look on his face. “Sorry – I know it’s The bed is big, and I think we’re going to need all the rest we can get.”

He nods.

“I hope you can get me my armor back. And I need something to sleep in.”

He nods again, a little lost. He walks to a large closet and pulls out a tunic, clearly his own.

“You can use this to sleep in. I hope it’s – it can work. I’m afraid your armor is gone. You need something suitable made.”

She takes the tunic, and lets the dress slide off her, not bothering with fake modesty. Solas turns away quickly, but not before she sees the blush on his cheeks. He changes with his back turned, and it doesn’t prevent her own staring. She should probably apologize, but she doesn’t.

Iwyn crawls under the blankets next to him. It feels strange, to share a bed with him again. She has a thousand questions. She wants to go home. She needs to calm her mind. She can feel the tension radiating off Solas, his breathing uneven. He looked so broken, after they were alone, and she knows he is deeply troubled. Did he think she would hate him? Fear him? Maybe she should, according to the legends, but she knows him. Her knowledge leaves no room for fear.

She lets her hand wander across the bed, and finds his. She curls her fingers around his, and he squeezes them gently in return. Good.

She falls asleep, holding his hand.

Chapter 2

Chapter Summary

The next day, some more truths needs to be told.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

He wakes in his own bed, soft sheets and soft light. He wakes with her pressed against him, her arm wrapped around him, her leg between his.

No, this is not his bed. Not anymore. And he should not be enjoying her closeness. Not anymore. But she didn't fear him, when he told her who he was. She didn't fear anyone, when those she believed gods stood before her. She impressed him, again, and again he is shamed. He should have told her earlier, when he had the chance. She has every right to despise him, and just because she showed him kindness last night doesn't mean it will last. It shouldn't, yet he is filled with a foolish hope.

He should disentangle himself, but he lets himself linger, pretending he deserves her. They are no longer lovers, he no longer has the right to enjoy her nearness. He can't ask her for forgiveness, for what he didn't say before last night and for what he has yet to tell her. The orb. The veil. The anchor. He is selfish, pretending she would still care for him, that she would hold him if she was awake.

He has to move eventually though. He still has so much to tell her, and he needs to understand when they are exactly. He got an idea last night at the party, but he doesn't know for sure. He cannot know too much, or too little. He must act like he did a long time ago, take on the persona that fits this time. Hopefully, there will be documents, research and communication on his desk which will provide clues.

He is deep in his paperwork, engrossed in a missive from Mythal, when he hears her bare feet on the floor. He didn't notice her wake up, and she now stands in his office, looking a little lost, wearing his tunic. It's too big, sliding off her left shoulder. There is something odd about seeing her here, in his own domain, wearing his clothes. Here, where he can reach his magic with no veil to stop him, where everything is as it should be. There is something right about her being here, and in one mad moment he can see it – finding another way to end the madness of the Evanuris, feeding the spark of magic and immortality within her. He could have her here, with him, with things right and true and he knows he should not imagine it, but the thought is so appealing, so right.

“Solas?”

It's a dangerous dream, and he ends it with a roll of his shoulder. She sounds lost, unlike yesterday, as if her mind has processed everything, but she has not yet come to terms with it. Understandable, all things considered. He should be focused on making her feel comfortable, and not his selfish desires.

“Twyn. Good morning.”

He is at a loss for words. He still has so much to tell her, and he doesn't know how to fix the look in her eyes or how she will react. Is it all coming to an end now? Will she scream and curse him now?

"Good morning. I'm glad you are still here. In these rooms, I mean." She smiles slightly, and it makes his heart soar with hope. She does not hate him, yet.

"I would not leave you here. I just wanted to get started on find out when exactly we are."

She sits on the couch, her legs curled up under her. The sight of her vulnerability stirs something in him, something much more dangerous than dreams of magic and immortality and setting things right.

"We need to know how to get back." Iwyn looks at her hand. "I still need to stop Corypheus – without me..."

"I know. I didn't know Dirthamen was experimenting with time magic, but the magic was his. Once I know more, hopefully we can find a way to get back."

If he wants to go back. He still can't shake the thought of a second chance to set things right.

"Are you truly Fen'Harel? The trickster who imprisoned the Creators... or what they are..."

"I am, and I did," he says. "Let me explain."

He sighs. He has to put all his cards on the table, even if he holds a losing hand. He gets up and he walks towards her, and then he paces back.

"At some point in what is now the future, the corruption and exploitation became too much. The Evanuris had declared themselves Gods, or people had decided they were. It was hard to tell the difference, but in the end it doesn't matter. There were wars, worse than any we had known before, and more and more elves were bound as slaves. We did not all agree on this, and I started to plan a quiet rebellion. Mythral shared my sentiment, but would not dissent openly. They still killed her, and I could not be quiet any longer."

"What happened?" Iwyn asks, frowning, but curiosity colors her voice. He grateful she is listening, not shaking in fear or cursing. Yet.

"I devised a plan, to remove the Evanuris from Elvhenan, to imprison the false gods forever, so every elven could live free. I raised the veil, and locked them away. But my plan only succeeded partly."

He walks past her, back to his desk, but there is nothing there to make it easier, nowhere to look save the wall. He should look at her, she deserves as much. He turns back towards her, hands folded behind his back.

"The veil was never meant to be permanent, but I had exhausted myself too far. I fell into sleep, uthenera, and woke only a year before the Conclave. It was... difficult to see what the veil had done, what I had caused. When the magic left the world, so did our power and immortality. Now, with the spirits and the fade cut off, everyone moves through the world like shadows, deprived of their true potential. Powerless and bereft. I turned the elven into what they are today, aging and weak. Every injustice done to them is because of me."

He can't look at her after all, his eyes fixed on a spot on the wall behind her. He doesn't like towering above her, but sitting next to her feels too intimate.

“You can’t blame yourself for how the world works, Solas. So many things has happened, and the veil has shaped the world. You can’t be to blame for the decline of Elvhenan. Where you there for the Exalted March? For the loss of the Dales? I think your plan worked, but the world is filled with cruelty. With loss and struggle.”

He shakes his head. With a gesture, he slides a chair from the corner and sits across from her, the low table a barrier between them, a shield he can hide behind. The heaviness inside of him grows. He loves her. The intensity shakes him. And yet he must go on, and shatter what still makes her trust him.

“The world is cruel, but it does not have to be so... diminished. I have to fix it.”

“How?”

He looks at her hands, and on his.

“The orb Corypheus carries, it is mine. It is a foci of great power, one I crafted – one I will craft – to harness my magic. When I awoke in your world, I was distraught. I was too weak to unlock my orb, and I needed its power. I... I made sure it fell into Corypheus hands. He was not supposed to live through unlocking it, and the mark was not supposed to be absorbed by a mortal. I didn’t expect... it wasn’t... none of this was supposed to happen.”

“So this mark is your magic? Your fault?”

He nods.

“You still haven’t told me why you needed your orb and this magic or what you mean by fixing the world,” she says. She cradles her left hand in her right, runs her thumb over the mark.

“Your world is...”

“Yours too,” she says sharply. “You live it in. Not now, but you will. You were there, alive.” She shakes her head in confusion.

“The veil makes it wrong. I plan to use the orb to tear it down. It will...” *kill you and everyone else I’ve come to care for*, “bring untold chaos as magic floods the world again, but all of this could be restored. Wrongs will be righted, but cost would be... high.”

“What cost? Would anyone survive?”

“Unknown.”

He can’t look at her, not now, when his duty presses his shoulders into the ground unbearable, but undeniable.

“I see,” she says, calmly. Too calmly, and when he finally looks up, she doesn’t look at him, her body tense and her muscles flexed as she stands. “Is there some place I can wash? I’d also like some clothes that aren’t... aren’t yours. And some breakfast. Do people not eat here?”

“Of course. The bathing chamber is through the door on the left in the bedroom. I will send someone in to take measurements for clothes, and for some food.”

She gets up and walks away, and he knows that he has lost her. He has never seen her so remote, so still. He feels chilled, and there is frost where her fingers touch the door. She doesn’t know, and along with everything else, he needs to teach her to control her magic, fast. Her heart will never

again warm to him, but for now they must keep up the ruse.

He sends for food, and tailors and a maid. At least he can offer her this, and then he should work on getting them back. It would do them no good to linger here, to try and change time is madness. What's more, Iwyn is bound to her time, friends and family and home. He has already taken enough from her.

He waves the servants through when they arrive, briefly explaining what he needs, and gestures for the food to be set out by the sitting area. He has no appetite. He sits, heavily, and stares at the paper he already read, an inconsequential message about an inconsequential topic. He wished he'd told her everything earlier. He wished he hadn't had to tell her at all. He deserves the coldness in her eyes. Every bit of her contempt. He wishes he had never touched that item in the temple. He wishes she could stay here with him. His wishes will do him nothing, but there is a relief in having told her everything. His plans have slipped through his fingers, again, but there are no more lies he has to carry, no more half-truths and omissions for him to live.

Chapter End Notes

This is now not just a one-shot! I had many people encourage me to write more on this, and I appreciate every single one of you.

Special thanks to EmpressTress13, who has been very excited for me working on this, and to Buttsonthebeach, for help with bouncing ideas and headcanons.

I will warn you, my dear readers, that I am slow to update and I have no set schedule for this. I hope you will still stick around!

Chapter 3

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Iwyn finds the bathing chamber easily enough. A doorway on the opposite end of the bedroom leads to another large room, one where the walls and floors are rose quarts, and soft light spills from floating orbs. There is sink and a tub and shelves with soft white towels. The tub has metal pipes and faucet, and with a few tries she manages to get hot water filling the bath. It must be some sort of strange magic, and she is happy it just works. She is in no mood to go ask Solas for help.

She strips, folding his shirt neatly.

She steps into the tub and dunks her head under the water, so hot it almost scalds her skin. It is a welcome distraction. She wishes it would clean the thoughts from her head, along with the dirt in her hair. She finds a flask with a clear, vicious liquid that creates a foam when she rubs it between her fingers. A soap, made liquid somehow. More magic, more strangeness. Even the Inquisition with all the resources Josie works to provide, has wooden tubs, filled by water heated in her fireplace, the soap a hard brick scented with lavender -- if she is lucky. The liquid soap foams easily, between her hands and in her hair (she is sure there is still mud in it somewhere from that blasted, rotten, temple). It has a pleasant smell; sandalwood, a hint of vanilla and something else. She realized it smells like Solas, and the scent comforts her.

“Fuck.”

She manages to stop herself from throwing the glass vial across the room.

Childish anger will do her no good, but she doesn't know what to do with her thoughts. Solas was the one to raise the veil. He felt it necessary, but now he wants to remove it again, no matter the cost. A cost he thinks could destroy everything in the world. He'd lied to her, or in the very least hidden truths she never imagined. He chose to run when he could have told her, chose to end their relationship rather than trust her. He picked his cause over her. Part of her admires his dedication, but she still wishes they could have talked about it. There must be some other way, some way they can find together. What had he planned to do, after they beat Corypheus? Grab the orb and run? Bring down the veil then and there, when they finally defeated him, possibly wrecking more havoc than Corypheus ever could?

She needs to push these thoughts aside. They need to go back, and she isn't sure how without Solas. Getting home and dealing with Corypheus must be her top priority. What happens after... maybe there is still time to change his mind, now that he told her, maybe she can...

A knock on the door interrupts her and her thoughts. She mumbles something affirmative, and three elves step through. A tall and pale woman, her black hair piled in top of her head in an intricate hairdo. A short man with long and curly brown hair. Another tall woman, with deep brown skin and cloud of hair surrounding her face.

“I'm Tialha, and this is my assistant, Ryil.” The last woman gestures towards the man. “We're here to take some measurements for clothes.”

“And help you dress.” the first woman adds. “I am Alina.” She unfolds a towel and holds it out expectantly, and Iwyn can do nothing else but step out of her bath.

Iwyn dries herself and accepts Alina's fussing and Tialha's measuring. She pulls string of light from her fingers, magic to help her craft. She lets their busyness sweep her up, talk of fabrics and colors and evening and daytime outfits. It occupies her mind, but it doesn't escape her notice that they don't question Solas needing a whole wardrobe for some unknown woman. She wonders about his influence, or whether this is a normal occurrence. They keep adding outfits to the list, and it seems resources are not an issue. She hopes they will be home before she can use them all.

They leave, and Alina, who has been sorting through the set of dresses she has brought, unfolds one in a pale pink color. Iwyn knows better than protest than she can dress herself, from the insistence of servants and helpers in Skyhold, and in Orlais at that blasted party. She is still not familiar with this kind of process, but it is not entirely foreign. She should thank Josie, if they get back. When they get back.

The dress itself is simple, soft fabric fastened with gold clasps at her shoulder. A decorative rope of twisted gold sits below bust and across her waist, and high slits allow freedom of movement. She still misses her armor.

"This should do nicely, my lady, though it is a little dated. I am sure no one with notice, with you being such a... novelty from the countryside," Alina says. Iwyn isn't sure if it is a backwards compliment or insult.

"Thank you, Alina."

The other woman nods. "Now, your hair. Sit."

There is nothing for her to do but comply. She wonders if this is going to be a daily occurrence, if no one here can dress themselves. Solas looked like he had, he had looked almost familiar in a simple tunic.

Alina steps back and regards her. "Better. Just a little –" she turns and grabs a small flat box from an upper shelf, dips her fingers inside and brushes them over Iwyn's cheekbones. "Wonderful."

Iwyn regards herself in the mirror – gold dust on her cheekbones, her hair piled high on her head. She wonders why Solas has makeup in his private bathroom. Does he have company often? Often enough to have gowns lying around, to have someone leave their makeup? She doesn't like it, ridiculous as it is. This is his past, and she always knew he had one. She didn't expect it to be... this. But she can't help but wonder about what sort of women, or men, he knew back then. Back now. She exhales. It is not her business, and she doesn't even care anymore. She doesn't.

Alina leaves with her thank you, and it does feel nice to be refreshed, to be dressed nicely and have her hair done. The bath calmed her and she enjoyed Alina's attention, if she is honest. It felt good to have someone care just about her. Here, she is not the Inquisitor, the Herald of Andraste. They must believe her a minor noble, and just herself. Even if she knows that they are loyal to Solas, they cared for her, and not her title. She glances in the mirror again. It looks like she belongs now, among the wealth and magic. She runs her hand over the fabric of her dress, feels its rich softness. She smiles at herself, and draws centering a breath. She hasn't sorted out her feelings about Solas, and everything he revealed, but now she knows she can face it.

When she returns to Solas' study, he is back at his desk, scribbling on piece of paper. Food is set out by the sitting area; breads of various shapes, cheese, fruits, and pastries. There is a pot of hot tea, and she knows that is for her. There is a tight, warm feeling around her heart, before she remembers that she is still upset.

"This looks delicious. Thank you Solas."

She can still be polite.

“Of course. Eat please, I am just going to –“ he looks up at her, and pauses. “I... I need to finish this.”

He keeps staring a little longer.

Iwyn sits and starts eating. The food is delicious, and she is pleased with Alina’s talents and Solas’ staring. It feels a little petty, but she will take what she can get.

“I’ve determined an approximate timeline for where we have been displaced to,” Solas says when he joins her. “I have also outlined some details about your assumed identity, should people ask.”

She nods, and notices Solas picking 3 pastries for his plate. She wonders how much of his true self she has seen. She doesn’t know which she would prefer. How can the man she knows, the man she loves – loved, want to violently upheave the world, without a care for the people in it?

“What about the device, and getting back?” She doesn’t want to be stuck here, and she is not sure how Solas feels about it. She will find a way back to her own time alone, if she has to. She can worry about her feelings later.

“I have not learned much. As I said, I was unaware that Dirthamen was tinkering with time magic, but the magic was clearly his. However, I found an invitation for a soiree he is hosting in a few days. We should attend, and find out as much as we can.”

“Good.”

She is relieved that he is working to get them back, and that he is willing to share the information.

Next, they go over her cover. She is posing as a commander in his army, and she gets a garrison, and hometown and a service record. Far enough away to that she should not get too many questions about people she should know. Closely associated enough that there should be no questions about how she met him – Lord Fen’Harel. She still doesn’t know who that is, and again she pushes that thought aside.

“We should also continue the... deception that we are... together. I apologize, but it will make certain things easier.” Solas’ words are formal, his left hand picking at his right sleeve. The tunic looks clean and new, there are no frayed threads.

“I’m sorry for your – inconvenience.” She knows he ended what was between them because of all the things he couldn’t say, but she can’t help to wonder what it meant to him. It’s not fair to doubt him, when she’s seen the pain in his eyes, but she is hurting too. “Was it ever real to you – or are you already used to pretending?”

“Never doubt that what we had was real – Iwyn, I... it’s...”

He reaches across the table, and brushes his hand against hers, a pulse of his magic following. Her heart beats wildly.

There is a loud knock on the door, and a man enters without waiting.

“Apologies, my Lord, but this is urgent. Lady Andruil has demanded your presence, as well that of others.”

“Demanded?” Solas turns, frowning.

“She was adamant, it appears to be about her slaves. I could send your regrets. My Lord.”

“No, we will be there. Just give us a moment. Thank you, Elas.”

Chapter End Notes

dun dun dun cliffhanger? maybe?

I apologize, I know this isn't much. But this will not be highly dramatic, I fear.
Hopefully the tumultuous emotions comes through.

Chapter 4

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

He has to follow Andruil's summons, as little as he wants to. The position he was in at this point in time affords him no less. He tries to remember what it was about, but he can't.

"Give me a moment, I need to change." He looks at Iwyn, who stands and nods. She is calm and strong, focused on what comes next. She doesn't comment on what he was trying – and failing – to say, even if she deserves a fuller explanation. Instead she is ready as for a battle. This is still a hostile environment for her, and she is not far off.

He loves her fiercely.

He moves back to his room, and finds a finer tunic, with a tall metallic collar. He adds a belt and tucks in a piece of black fur. He should look presentable enough now, so that Andruil can't publicly take offense – but not fine enough that he acknowledges her importance. At least he thinks he got the balance right.

He adds a simple hoop to one ear, but not the other. He forgot how tiring these calculations were, and how they used to be second nature.

"What can I expect?" Iwyn asks when they are leaving together, walking towards the eluvian.

"I am not sure. Some spectacle, Andruil always liked those. I don't recall this particular one, but I would expect posturing, demands of power and privileges."

He pinches the bridge of his nose. These years were not the worst, the most obscene or decadent. But it was the foundation, for all that came after, and he regrets he didn't see it earlier.

"How should I act?"

"Stay close and follow my lead. Please, I need you to trust me. I worry about changing the political situation I'm before I have my bearings. Your actions are seen as mine or an extension of my position. Again, I apologize, I... didn't think of a better cover."

"It's fine, Solas. I understand."

He activates the eluvian, and they walk a short path to the one in Andruil's halls. He fills her in with as many details as he can remember.

When they arrive, many people are already there. The eluvian stands in a grand courtyard, filled with trees and crystals shaped by magic. The ground is smooth and covered in polished silver, only broken by the roots of the massive trees. Colorful birds swoop among the branches, but the people filling the courtyard are the true spectacle, more vibrant and posturing than the birds.

Almost everyone notices their arrival.

He places a hand at the small of Iwyn's back, and guides her through the crowds. They make their way to the side of dais in the middle of the courtyard. Sylaise is here, as is Falon'Din and Dirthamen. He wishes he could question the man, but whatever experiments he is doing, they are not public. They never are, and he wonders what else Dirthamen had tinkered with, that he never

knew about.

Iwyn's back is rigid, her smile strained. He automatically rubs his hand in soothing gestures across her back, he lets his magic run along her skin. He shouldn't, but his heart sings when she relaxes ever so slightly, when she allows him to comfort her.

"Lord Fen'harel," Dirthamen says, inclining his head. "I've heard about your new... acquaintance. I hope you both will attend my little event."

"Lord Dirthamen. This is Lady Iwyn, commander of the Ashon'lan battalion. We look forward to attending."

"Please to meet you," Iwyn says, meeting his eyes.

"Likewise. I look forward to meeting you under more pleasant circumstances."

They are interrupted by Andruil who finally appears, striding confidently out of her fade step. She is shorter than Solas remembers, her brown hair braided intricately. She is wearing a pale yellow gown, excessively decorated with ribbons in white and green. Her eyes scan the crowd.

"Where is Mythal and Farath?"

He had forgotten about Farath. With too many public missteps, she would be gone and forgotten soon.

A blonde elf, his valleslin gently shimmering in a pale purple, bows before Andruil and whispers something. She backhands him, sending him flying across the ground.

Iwyn tenses beside him, but says nothing. He wants to leave.

Andruil sneers, and then all her birds screech at the same time, an eerie noise. The crowd falls silent.

"My dear friends," Andruil begins, and Solas hears Falon'Din suppress a chuckle. The man was never any good at politics. "Thank you for taking the time to come here today. It is fitting that you do, as I will soon rise above you."

He has not missed Andruil's 'modesty'.

"It has come to my attention," she continues, "that some do not value my contributions – or those of my peers - to peace and order. That some think they do not owe me any loyalty. That they are free to do as they want."

She pauses her pacing, and seems to gather herself, her eyes scanning the crowd. Or maybe she is looking for a suitable target.

"You!" Andruil says, pointing at an elf in the crowd. The man steps forward, his head high and his spine rigid. His face is marked with valleslin the shape of shifting leaves, and Solas does not know him.

"You thought you could betray me. You thought you could spread slander about me."

"I did no such thing, my lady."

"You're a liar. An ungrateful nobody."

“I apologize. My Lady.” The man bows deeply, his voice trembling. Solas hopes that will be the end of it. He isn’t that lucky. Andruil walks forward, her footfalls echoing with menace.

“Who do you belong to?” she asks him.

“Falon’Din.”

“Ahh, Falon’Din.” Andruil looks straight them, her eyes locking with Falon’Din’s. “Will you challenge my authority, Falon’Din, over this man of yours who has insulted me?”

Behind him Falon’Din shuffles, but says nothing. Solas clenches his fist. He briefly considers speaking up, but he isn’t sure he can afford it. He is paralyzed by his own past.

Andruil focuses on the elf in front of her again, stepping into his space.

“He doesn’t care. He won’t protect you. You are nothing but a wretched slave.”

A blade glints in Andruil’s hand, and the man says nothing.

“It doesn’t matter you’re not mine. You were still spreading lies about me, and I think it’s time something is made clear. I can be judge, jury and executioner, and none will stand against me. It is my right.”

Her blade flashes, and blood sprays from the man’s throat, and his head falls unnaturally forward.

“Be glad I made it quick.”

The blade flashes again, and Andruil buries her sword in the man’s chest. He falls backwards.

Andruil laughs and licks a drop of blood from her lips, uncaring of the mess on her gown. Solas hates this, and hates even more that he has forgotten the incident. Just one of many. Solas bites the inside of his cheek. Now is not the time.

“Does anyone wish to challenge my authority?” Andruil says, her voice ringing through the courtyard.

The crowd says nothing. The birds chip and croak, oblivious and alive. The sun reflects off the crystals.

Blood is spilled on the smooth silver ground, red and real, leaving the mangled body cooling beneath the trees.

Iwyn’s lips are thin, pressed together in silence, but her eyes speak volumes.

This is not the Elvhenan he wants to show her, this is what he fought against, this is what he (later, much too late) tried to stop. He wishes he only had the beauty to show her, the magic and wonder. The knowledge and learning, the joyful spirits and endless warm nights.

There is truth in this horror, but it is not the whole truth.

“My father has Andruil’s markings on his face. He reveres her. Goddess of the Hunt.”

She spits it out angrily, and he decides he will not tell her how far her madness will reach, in the end.

“I’m sorry, Iwyn,” he says, and he means it. He has derided the Dalish for their worship of their false gods, but he has not taken the time to consider what this means to them before. How it would feel to have your world upended, to have a sincere belief and have it taken away.

Maybe the Dalish are not foolish, unlike those who should have known better when the Evanuris decided to rule as Kings and Gods. Maybe they were but clinging to what they knew, and what would help them through their lives.

“Your father – your clan – they did not know. They could not know.” This is the truth and now he understands. “They worship an idea, a powerful huntress who brings life and food to the table. Not a madwoman bent on slaughter.”

“I know!” she says.

Iwyn paces in his study – they retreated here when they returned. Someone has removed the breakfast and left fresh breads and olives and pickled peppers. Iwyn hasn’t touched it.

He wants to reach out and touch her, to hold her, comfort her with his hands and words, but she would not appreciate it. He hasn’t seen her upset like this, not since the early time in Haven, when thrust into uncertainty and accused of killing the Divine.

She turns to him, flexing her hands.

“Why do you want to bring this back? How is this better than anything in the present?”

“When the veil fell in place permanently, so much was lost. So many people lost. So much knowledge, a whole way of living. Everything became diminished.”

“That’s not an answer.”

“There are good things here, too. What became of the world is not right. Living without magic is barely living at all.”

“It works out fine for the people who live it. My people still have magic, magic that is used to help people. How can you support this – this madness?”

“I do not. This is why I tried to change it. I failed and I have to try again, to make things right.”

He desperately clings to his plans, his mistakes, and his duty. It’s all he knows.

“And if you do, how do you know it’ll be better?”

“The world you live in is broken. Are the atrocities any less? It must be undone.”

“Why not fix what is there? Why not change the world by moving forward, not back?”

“I can’t. I…”

“You won’t.”

She turns and leaves, striding out of the room.

Solas stands there for a while, staring at the door. The truth is that he is no longer sure of what he must do. It was why he had to leave her, to break her heart before he would break his duty.

Can he change the past, now? He wants to, to try and do better a second time. What if none of what will happen comes to pass? What if he can fix it *this* time, and live here, with her, and change everything? He shakes his head. The risk is so great. What if she will simply... cease to be, if he changes the past and the future with it? It hurts to think of. What of everyone else she knows, her friends, her family? Would they never exist? He would not make that choice and be able to look her in the eyes.

His duty should be clear, even if the possibilities are murky. But he misses her already, even though she just walked out the door.

Everything here feels wrong and hollow without her. Iwyn has changed him. The world has changed him. What of his friends, in the Inquisition? because that is what they are now, friends.

His own world doesn't feel like his home anymore. He has no desire to undo the future, he –

Solas sits, head in his hands.

Chapter End Notes

Thank you everyone for your patience <3

Chapter 5

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Iwyn doesn't have a plan when she leaves, all she knows is that she needs to get some air, to feel the wind on her face. The hallways are tall and beautiful, and she knows the way to the eluvian and nowhere else. She walks the other way, wondering if this place even has a proper exit, a door, or if she is prisoner in this ethereal place, a mansion of sparkling magic with no way out.

She doesn't want to know if it's rotten underneath, if Solas contributed the rot as much as all of them. *You wouldn't have liked me when I was young.* How young did he mean? Or did he mean this, the corrupt meanness, the meaningless splendor and callous disregard for life?

Luckily, she soon finds herself in a courtyard, with rows of low bushes and pathways and trees. Across it is an outer wall and huge set of double doors, they are open and beyond there is roads and houses; a whole city.

No one stops her when she exits through the gates.

The streets are wide and covered with flat stones. The houses are tall and painted in vibrant colors. She slows her steps and looks around curiously. Some of the houses are tall and graceful, with trees growing through the corners, and some are small and square with crystals glowing on the second-floor balconies. She walks among the people there, elves and spirits who drifts aimlessly like her, or hurry determinedly on errands she doesn't understand.

She turns down a large road. There is a shop selling flowers, and next to it a bookshop and next to that a bakery. The smell of fresh bread is familiar, the same as when her mother bakes it, as the kitchens of Skyhold, as the small bakery just outside the alienage in Wycome, or as the large one with white-clothed tables where she purchased sweets at in Val Royeaux, so long ago. She is hungry, but she has no money. She continues down the street, past the bakery and a barber, a butcher and a shop that sells only stationary. How much stationary does one person need?

She follows the street a little longer, and then another and another. The streets are straight at first, and then winding, passing up and between small hills. The area here seems residential, with fewer people around, and kids roaming the streets. A boy of about twelve seem to be doing magic tricks for an adoring crowd of younger kids. He lights up in a proud smile when the kids gasp when the dancing lights he has conjured chases down the street. Iwyn laughs too.

She decides to turn back a little later, only to realize she is lost. No matter which way she walks, she can't find the corner the boy was on, or the hill she walked up, or the street with the bakery. She waves at a beautiful lady who is watering plants in floating pots, and she is still lost. The houses here are taller than anywhere else, and maybe if she could get up she could see where she needs to go. Solas' house was more like a palace, and it should be easy to spot. It's easy enough for her to find a house she can climb, clear crystals jutting out from the vivid blue surface. She wonders if the house is grown, somehow, from magic, but it seems solid enough. She avoids the wooden balcony, just in case someone is home, and soon enough she has scaled the four stories. The roof is only slightly slanted, and she walks across the black tile, looking in all directions.

She is still lost. It makes no sense that she can't see Solas' place, that she can't even see the shops or the straight streets. Just houses and more houses, the streets curling around them like big lazy cats.

Iwyn sighs, and sits down. It's so unlike her to run off in frustration, but it was all so much. The roof is warm from the sun, and she lies down, starting up at the sky. She doesn't regret seeing the city through her own eyes. She still doesn't understand Solas, or his world. Not fully, but she knows now there is a life where elves water their plants and play in the streets and eat fresh bread from the bakery. A few puffy, white clouds drift across the sky, and a hawk chases across the sky, brown and mundane.

She doesn't know how long she lies on the roof, but the light grows warmer and the shadows longer and the day colder. Someone climbs up on the roof, and Solas sits down next to her.

"You found me," she says, sitting up.

"I hope you do not mind," he replies.

She shakes her head, and smiles a little.

"I got lost."

"It's a big city."

"It's beautiful."

"Thank you. I am glad you can see the beauty here."

"Solas – I'm sorry for storming out. It was... I mean, everything was... I'm sorry." She can't find the right words. Her emotions are everywhere, and it's dusk, and she's cold in this flimsy dress. She rubs her arms.

"It is I who should apologize," he says, looking out at the city. "I'm sorry you had to see that. And I'm sorry about – about everything else." He gestures, turning his hand up. She doesn't know if he means the time travel, or his deception, his future plans or his stubbornness. Maybe all of it, and maybe it doesn't matter unless he wants to change.

"Did you ever – did you ever kill people, just like that?" She needs to know, now, though she doesn't think he would. It isn't as if blood and death are unfamiliar to her, but a battle is different.

"No."

"Okay," she says. "I didn't think so, but I just needed to know."

"Thank you." The words soften his profile, harsh and angular against the setting sun. She rubs her arms again.

"Are you cold? May I?" he asks.

She nods, and his magic flows over her, familiar and easy. She wonders if the elves of Arlathan ever used coats. Maybe only to look dramatic.

"I'm also hungry. Can you fix that too?"

He laughs a little and this pleases her.

“Not with magic, I’m afraid. But I know of a small restaurant a short walk from here. If you want to join me.”

He suddenly looks bashful, like a young hunter asking a maiden for a walk to the stream. She likes that too, and she agrees readily. She is also really hungry.

They easily climb down from the building, and soon enough find themselves in at a small restaurant. There are five tables with different colored tablecloths. Magic lights floats above them, all in different soft colors. At the counter in the back is an elf with big curly hair, a few tones brighter red than Iwyn’s own, and pale skin with lots of freckles. He greets Solas warmly and they talk a little, and when Solas introduces her, she is greeted warmly. They are seated in the back, away from the door. It’s warm and cozy and Solas’ warming spell slips away. She misses it far too much.

They order their food, and she drinks deeply of her water. Solas pours wine for her, and she doesn’t mind. It’s refreshing, with slight taste of citrus.

“You come here often,” she says.

“I did. The food is good, and it’s not well known.”

They talk a little of the city and Elvhenan. Of life and magic and plants and how she managed to get lost. Solas is right, this place is private and very different from the courts she has seen so far. Their argument from earlier has faded away, and she isn’t ready yet to ask more about what happened. He smiles and she smiles, and their food arrives. He is right about the food too, it’s good. Solas wants her to try everything, and offers her food from his plate. He blushes, and he pours her more wine.

She is warm and happy and full when they leave, and she links her arm in his. It’s dark now, and the streetlights are glowing. They look like regular streetlights, with flickering flames inside. She wonders if someone came by to light them, or if it’s magic.

There is nothing to suggest they aren’t just leaving from a dinner date, and she almost wants to keep pretending. They’d go home and they’d crawl into his bed, and she wonders if he’d kiss her back if she kissed him. She is a little drunk.

“Solas,” she says. “Can I ask you something?”

He nods.

“Why didn’t you stop Andruil today? You said you rebelled against the Creators, and imprisoned them. Why did you wait?”

He stops. They are next to a park, a big oak tree on a small plot of land. Almost like the Alienage trees she’s seen. Solas looks at the tree and the spirits below it and the teenager playing with a puppy. He looks back at her, earnest. Maybe she should have asked him the question that came into her mind first, but she can’t just ignore what happened.

“This is not a discussion for a public street. Please, let me take us somewhere else.”

“Of course.”

He takes a step and she follows him, her arm still in his. The magic moves them swiftly, and when she takes another step, they’re on the flat roof of a small tower. They’re back at Solas’ mansion, just the two of them underneath the stars.

Solas lets go of her and start pacing, his hands behind his back.

“I didn’t know.”

“What do you mean, you didn’t know? You were there today – I assume you were before too?”

She stops him in his path; there isn’t much space up here, not really.

“It may seem extreme now, but for me, for us, it was a sliding scale. I didn’t realize yet... I didn’t understand my purpose. Soon, Elvhenan will be attacked by monstrous beings, the likes I have seen since. We won and they never returned. When I was told... “

Solas stalls. He shakes his head. He turns around and looks out over the city. There is light and magic in little dots spread across the city. The lights spread and spread, and the city is bigger than Val Royeaux. She wonders if Solas sees the city, or something else. She stands next to him, not quite touching him.

“My sister had a gift of foresight. She told me I had to gather power, that the very survival of Elvhenan depended on it. When we were attacked, all the nobles stopped their petty games and drove them back. When we won, we were declared kings and queens, wise leaders. I foolishly thought my purpose filled. It wasn’t until later, when Andruil went back to her killing, when Elgar’nau demanded more slaves, more power – it wasn’t until then I understood what she meant. And by then I had squandered my time. I did not save Elvhenan. I doomed us all.”

“Your sister?”

She has so many questions, never-ending. She knows so little of him, of this place.

“She is... long gone.” Solas fiddles with the jawbone on his chest, and turns to her, but he is still tall and distant. “It doesn’t matter now.”

She knows enough to know he is hurting. She puts her hand on his arm.

“You must miss her. I didn’t mean to bring up painful memories.”

“I don’t mind. I – Her name was Enara. It’s good to remember her. She would have liked you.”

He smiles at her, and she nods. She would have liked to meet her too. Solas looks back at the city.

“About today, and Andruil – I can’t act know. Both because changing the past would have consequences I cannot foresee, but I also can’t erode anyone’s power right now. All their power will be needed the war to come.”

“I see,” she says, and she does. And no matter how horrible it seems, it has already happened, once before. The world and the Dalish and every other elven are still there. The world that Solas dismisses.

“But what about after the war. Would you change that? If you – stayed here?”

She doesn’t want to stay. She wants to go home, and she selfishly wants Solas with her, even if he doesn’t reach for her anymore.

“I... I have given it some thought, I admit. If this had happened right when the Breach was new, I wouldn’t have hesitated. I would have taken the chance, even if I changed the course of time, or maybe because I could do that. Now – now I do not know.”

“Let’s find a way home, first. I miss it.”

“I know,” he says, his eyes kind and reassuring.

She can give him a little more time, but she wants to drag him fully into her own world and have him stay.

Chapter End Notes

Again, thank you for your interest and your patience <3

Thank you to Buttsonthebeach and her Claudia, for reminding me of the universalness of fresh bread <3

Chapter 6

When Solas wakes the next morning, Iwyn is already awake and not in his bed. He can hear her in the bathing chamber. He regrets she awoke first, that he did not have time to enjoy her closeness today. The sheets smell like her now, and it should be out of place, but oddly enough it makes his bed feel more like home. He closes his eyes and wishes for more than just her body next to him. He yearns for her touch, for everything they shared. Everything that he discarded. He had become too close, and he had barely adjusted to being alone again. Now they are sharing a bed once more, and it feels like home, and he doesn't know if he can bear letting go again.

It is dangerous territory, dangerous wishes.

Iwyn enters the bedroom, dressed in some of the clothes his tailors delivered yesterday. She has chosen a sleeveless tunic in pale blue and some light pants. The tunic is snug with small flowers crawling up the side, stitched by skill and magic. Iwyn runs her hands through her wet hair, pulling it up in a pony tail.

Dangerous desires.

He stifles a groan and sits up. At least he is under the blankets still.

"I'm sorry, Solas. I didn't mean to wake you," she says.

"You didn't. I have just woken."

"The sun does seem to have been up for a while," Iwyn says as she walks to the large windows. She tilts her head up, bathed in the morning light. Dust motes and magic swirl around her.

"—Solas?"

"Sorry? Did you ask something?"

She laughs. "Not quite awake, I see. I asked if it's possible to open these?" There is a small balcony beyond the floor-to-ceiling windows, big enough to stand on, but not to sit. He waves a hand and one of the glass panels retreat, faded away for the moment.

Iwyn smiles and steps out on the balcony. She breathes in the air, and starts to move, gracefully bending and stretching. He stares, and realizes he is staring, and hurries to get up.

Later, they have breakfast outside, on one of the larger balconies. Iwyn likes the fresh air, he knows, and there is no reason they should be cooped up in his study or bedroom. They eat in silence, at first. He doesn't want to bring up last night, or at least not their discussion. He still doesn't know what to do, what the best course of action is. Change the past? Change his plans? He wonders what Enara would say, what she would see. It's no use thinking about. He wants to be with Iwyn, and he wants to change everything because of her, but he knows he shouldn't. It is not the plan.

"It was nice moving a bit," Iwyn says, breaking the silence, "but I miss training. Is there a place I can use a bow? Do you have a bow?"

He should have thought of that. He is satisfied with the magic in his veins, how it sings to him constantly without interruption. For Iwyn, her skill is with her bow, with her body, and she must miss it.

“Of course – there is a training yard in the back. I’m sure we can find a bow that suits you.”

They finish breakfast and they do find a bow. Iwyn lines up targets, focuses, and soon forgets he is there, watching – he can’t help but watch her, like he did this morning.

She hits all her targets, a rapid and sure warmup. She retrieves the arrows for another round. This time she moves further away, ready for the real work. This is not too different from the times he watched her in Skyhold, and he is not surprised when she drops to one knee, carefully lining up a powerful shot. The arrow flies surely, embedding itself with tremendous power in the wooden target. Iwyn notches another, her bare arms flexing, tensing her whole body, and then she lets the arrow fly.

This time, it splinters the target, continues beyond it, and hits the wall.

It’s enough to pull him out of his entrancement of her arms, and he goes to her where she stands stunned. He is equally amused and concerned, and he can’t keep the grin off his lips.

“That was not what I expected,” she says.

“You used your magic.” He can almost feel it, this close. It sings to him. “It would be most prudent to practice it, before an accident happens.”

“Probably. I’m going to finish this first though.”

She raises the bow again and draws the bow, her arms flexing and her body strong. His magic wants to reach for her, but he nods.

“Just don’t burn down my house, please.”

She grins at him. His heart beats faster.

She lets the arrow fly, and continues with another and then another, her focus returned to the targets. No magic, and she doesn’t need it.

He admires her skill until she is satisfied, a couple of rounds later.

“I needed a workout. I’m glad you had a bow and a range.”

He nods. A light sheen of sweat is covering her, and a drop of it clinging to her clavicle. He wants to lick it. Being near her, with no excuses to stay apart, with the ruse of a romantic involvement, is maddening. No one would be surprised if he pressed against a column, kissing and licking. His pants feel tighter, and he needs to focus his thoughts elsewhere.

“Should we practice your magic now?” he asks. It should serve as a distraction, a way to focus his mind. It is also necessary, as today shows. They cannot risk the questions they would be asked if Iwyn cannot control the most basic magic.

He explains as much, and she agrees. Any elven would be expected to have learned from childhood. They decide to practice in private, to avoid curious eyes, but he doesn’t take her back to the private study in his suite. They have spent too much time there already, being too close to each other. Instead he takes her to a small, bright guestroom, with open windows facing the front courtyard, but two stories up.

“We should have some privacy here,” he says, as he pulls up a chair. Iwyn does the same, and they sit facing each other.

“Let’s begin,” he says.

“Okay. I already use magic with my bow, but it’s not something I think about. And I channel the magic of the Mark, but it doesn’t really feel like my own magic.”

He nods. The mark, his mark, is a complication, and though it has been dormant here, it is still there. They will have to work around it.

“Try consciously summoning a bit of fire.”

She frowns. “Where?”

He points to a small ceramic bowl on the table. Iwyn frowns again. It explodes in a blast of heat, blue shards everywhere.

“Crea – ! I’m sorry.”

“Don’t worry about it.” He waves his hand to sweep the pieces into a neat pile.

“It was pretty, though.”

“It was but one of many. Tell me how you attempted the fire.”

“I just did the same I do with my arrows. I think they should be on fire, and then they are.”

“There is a difference between fire and explosions.” He frowns. “How come you learned to use exploding arrows? It is hardly something a hunter would need.” He cannot imagine the Dalish risking burning down the forest.

“We always had a good enough relationship with the humans in Wycome, where our permanent settlement is. But high up in the meadows, where we go in the summer, we would sometimes meet less friendly humans. Templars, and others. A burst of fire was a good safety measure, though it didn’t always keep them away.”

“I’m sorry.”

She shrugs. “It was more useful in the Inquisition.”

He thinks of the fear, of all the things Iwyn and her clan should not fear. They should be free and proud and full of magic and they would be, were it not for him. Then again, he remembers the fear in the air at Andruil’s affair, and almost worse, the dull apathy. He wonders if she isn’t right, if what he is trying to bring back is nothing but a dream that cannot exist, that will inevitably corrupt and falter. He shakes his head to clear it.

“Try again, and think of a gentle fire, small and comforting.”

This time she fares better, and he leads her through a couple of exercises in feeling her magic, trying some different types. She picks it up fairly quickly, but controlling the magnitude and the flow magic is more elusive.

“Feel the magic,” he says, and grips her hand. He sends a wave of magic up it, and then a gentle stream, then some soft pulses.

“I think I feel it.”

Iwyn’s lips are parted, and she is very close.

“Now you try, do it with me.”

She does, after a few tries she sends her magic into him. Her magic is different and familiar, a presence he has always known was there, the very essence of her. He pushes his own magic along with hers, a steady beat.

“Oh. I feel it.”

Her eyes sparkle, and a wisp of red hair has escaped her ponytail. Her arms are bare, and her hand is in his and she is very close, and her magic is closer.

He kisses her.

She freezes and then she kisses him back, and he has missed her, and she opens her mouth and he can't get close enough. He wants her, and he shouldn't. Her other hand finds his shoulder, and pulls him to her, and it's not enough. He loves her and he shouldn't. He shouldn't.

He breaks the kiss and stumbles backwards, his chair clattering to the floor.

“I'm sorry – I shouldn't have, I can't –”

He flees.

He hurries from the room, down a corridor and then another, his feet tracing ancient familiar patterns, until he closes a door behind him, sealed by his own magic.

He is weak, a coward, a selfish fool. Her loves her, and he cannot. He should not have done that. But he did; he kissed her. He paces, he stops. He leans his head against the cool wall. He paces again, restless. Her lips were so inviting, and he is weak. He loves her, and he must not. He has hurt her enough, betrayed her enough. He has no right to hurt her again, to let her know how much he still loves her when they can't be together.

He had thought, briefly, maybe – she kissed him back, and despite everything she might still love him. Maybe there is a way for them, for him –

He is assuming, and that is even worse. She might hate him; she should hate him, for all that he has done, and hasn't done. Maybe she was just taken by surprise, by the familiarity. It makes sense, she has moved on, and he has no right to think she is interested. He should move on too. It is for the best, for his plans. All of this should change nothing.

He sits down and breathes. It can't happen again. He will apologize. The magic brings closeness, and so does their situation – not that it is any excuse, or explanation really, for he simply loves her. But he must tell her this, and she can be free of him. He can continue his plan, he can fix the world gone wrong.

He doesn't want to, and he is no longer sure if it's wrong at all.

Solas pushes the thought aside and gets up. The least he can do is to make sure she returns home safely, so she can live out whatever time she has with her family. He thinks of Enara, and he thinks of the letters Iwyn writes to her brother, to her family. It is no use changing the past, and he owes it to her to get her back to her own time. He can worry about his plan and his failures then, but in this he cannot fail her. They must find the device, and travel back – forward, really, to when they were.

He finds Iwyn much later, reading in his library. Whatever magic has made it possible for her to speak Elvish does not work quite the same on reading, and she is quietly sounding out the words as she reads. It makes him smile, before he can stop himself.

He folds his hands behind his back, and clears his throat.

“Solas,” she says. Her face is neutral, her eyes boring into him.

“I came to apologize.”

“For running away, or for the kiss?”

“Ah – both. I should not have done that. It was not – I’m not – I’m truly sorry.”

“I understand,” she says, and returns to her reading.

Solas understands less, least of all himself, all he knows is a disquiet within him. He fidgets with his bracelet, with the hem of his sleeve. He wants to fall to his knees and beg her to kiss him again, to say that he is a fool, to declare his love.

He turns around and leaves.

It is for the best, he reminds himself.

The next few days are awkward, as they prepare for Dirthamen’s soiree. He still has to teach her magic, but he does not touch her, or her magic, again. She progresses well enough so that she will not raise suspicion.

They go over people, politics, and customs. They practice dancing, and touching her is agony and ecstasy and loss. He sketches Dirthamen’s mansion as he remembers it, and they cover what they will do and what they will look for. They both desperately hope they will learn something, anything about the device. All other options have led nowhere.

Iwyn is stiff and formal with him, and he hadn’t realized how close and how easy she had still acted with him, how often she smiled at him. Now she turns and withdraws as soon as they are alone.

It is unbearable, and yet he has chosen this.

They will find the device, and they will travel forward in time, and he will forget this. Forget the closeness and the rightness and her body next to him. Forget their kiss, and the kisses before that. Forget wine and dinner and companionship, forget the nights he spent in her bed, and the nights she spends in his. Forget the sheets that smell like her, like home.

Chapter 7

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Alina is fussing with Iwyn's hair, weaving gold into it, and arranging it into a braid draped over her shoulder.

"It's a bit short, but it will do." Alina narrows her eyes, and purposefully tucks loose a few tendrils.

Iwyn looks at herself in the floor length mirror. Her dress is long and sage green, and draped of soft fabric. It leaves her arms and her back bare, with ribbons tied over her shoulders. It is nothing like the stiff Orlesian gowns with corsets and underskirts and structure. This dress is light and breezy, beautiful but intricate.

She twirls and smiles, she can't help it. The dress is lovely, and it suits her perfectly. Her makeup is light and pretty and completes the look.

"It is beautiful. Thank you, Alina," she says, as the other woman leaves.

It is time for Dirthamen's party, and she looks as ready as she is going to look. She hopes they are ready in every other respect as well. She wants to go home. Iwyn flexes her left hand, the anchor dormant under her skin. She needs to go home. She hopes Corypheus hasn't laid waste to all of Thedas in the present; that the Inquisition, her friends, her clan, and her family are all still there when she gets back. She will go home.

Iwyn steps out of the bedroom, and into the study. Solas has been finished a while, and he is wearing a soft white shirt and grey tunic, brown pants and piece of wolf fur across his shoulder. His hands are clasped behind his back, like always.

Solas stares. She knows she looks great, and part of her enjoys his staring. The part of her that isn't fed up with him, fed up with the fact that he is clearly interested, but he also isn't. She can't figure out if it's purely physical attraction he can't get rid of, or if he's just stubborn enough to turn back on any true feelings he may have.

She tells herself she doesn't care, she is done waiting for him, done with this push and pull. She had hoped that forcing action would have pushed him, would have made his walls break down; instead it made them higher and now she shouldn't bother to scale them.

"Iwyn," he says. His voice is crumbling as much as her determination.

She notices his collar is folded back under the fur, and she reaches to fix it, fingers brushing against his skin. She wants them to linger there, but she can't.

"Ready?" she asks. They have a job to do.

Solas nods.

When they arrive through the eluvian in Dirthamen's foyer, the party is already in full swing. The halls are swirling with colorful magics and people. It is so much brighter and livelier than she expected, she had imagined the God of Secret to live in a dark and dreary place, full of shadows and whispers. She tells Solas much, and he mentions she will find the whispers soon enough, but they are not Dirthamen's alone.

They circulate, and she can barely keep track of everyone, despite the preparations. Solas seems to slip right into it, playing along with the intrigues and mysteries as if he was born to do so. He probably was, of course, and Iwyn is the only stranger here.

There are conversations along trays of food in a lavish room behind the mirrored hall filled with dancing couples. The walls are white at the bottom, gradually turning blue and indigo. The ceiling is dark and infinite, littered with tiny magic stars. She wants to reach up and touch them. People are eating and idly gossiping, smiling and flirting. This has none of the oppressive air at Andruil's gathering – though Andruil herself is here, somewhere, her mean laugh echoing along the halls.

They need to be seen, and to be remembered as party guests. It is all part of their plan to let the evening progress until they can slip away and find Dirthamen's study.

So they dance, a little later, and it's a good thing they practiced that too. Solas' hands are firm and he is far too close, and far too tender. Alone, it had been somewhat careful, stifled, but not here, when they are putting on a show. She loves it and she hates it, drawing every last bit of pleasure from his nearness.

When they get off the dance floor someone gestures at Solas, and immediately starts a conversation about some magical theory. Solas introduces her to Lord Dirthamen, a shorter man with deep ochre skin and black hair. He has kind eyes, like her father. She can't follow the theory, and when Dirthamen pulls Solas into a nearby room to draw up some diagram, she takes her leave of them. She goes off to mingle, giving herself an opportunity to find out how busy the side corridors are, if there are guards or servants.

The party doesn't sprawl much, almost everyone are in the ballroom or nearby. It is not entirely empty in the side halls, though, so they should be able to explore a little without attracting too much attention. Satisfied with her scouting, she takes some time to look and observe the life around her.

Once alone she hears whispers she didn't hear before. They don't know her, and they dismiss her.

"Fen'Harel – he will be finished soon."

"Dragging some no-one along. Typical. He is just a guard dog. I've heard Mythal will denounce him soon."

"He is slacking, getting soft."

She hurries away. They are not just talking about Solas, but the gossip about him is what she notices. It's not so cordial after all. It's worse than the Winter Palace, and she wants to argue, to yell at them all. He survived you all, she thinks. He is smarter, and kinder, and stronger than anyone.

She takes a deep breath and looks across the dance floor. Just a little longer, and their presence will have been enough. She is about to find Solas, when someone is at her side, saying her name. She turns to find a short elf with red hair and a sky-blue shirt. He asks her for a dance, and she has to agree.

One dance leads to another, and then more, changing partners as the dances goes on. Surprisingly she enjoys herself, thankful of the dance practice, enjoying the joyful informality of it, and the lack gossip. It is more of a ball than party, she realizes, the dancing taking central stage. Solas is still nowhere to be seen, when she catches her breath and drink.

“I’m glad you are here, Lady Iwyn,” someone says next to her. Sylaise. Tall and imposing, she wears a long white dress with tall slits for her legs, showing off her green pants underneath. Her black hair is braided, much more intricately than Iwyn’s own.

“It’s great to meet you again, Lady Sylaise.” It’s not entirely a lie. She is both fascinated and scared.

“A dance, Lady Iwyn?”

She nods, and Sylaise leads her into the dance again, dresses swirling about them.

“You arrived with Lord Fen’Harel, I assume. I haven’t seen him yet.”

“I did. He went to discuss some magical theory with our host, I believe.”

“Leaving you all alone? I do hope Solas entertains someone like you properly, and doesn’t leave you wanting or bored.”

“Thank you for your concern, but I’m sufficiently entertained.”

“I suppose he does beg so prettily.”

A surge of jealousy rushes through her. It is one thing to know he has had lovers before her, it is another thing to meet them. To learn that the false god whose tattoos adorned her face knows him, intimately. Knows things about him that she thought was hers alone.

“He does.”

She still has a game to play. She smiles.

“I bet I can make you beg too,” Sylaise bends and whispers in her ear, her lips brushing against it. She shivers against her will, but catches Sylaise’s eyes and holds her gaze.

“I’m not so sure.”

The music swells and she twirls away and back, firmly in Sylaise arms when it comes to a halt.

“Is that a challenge?” Sylaise asks, and she holds Iwyn’s chin between her thumb and other fingers, tilting her head up. Her eyes are black pools, and it’s hard to see where her pupils begin and end. Iwyn feels the heat between them, and for moment she is curious.

It must have shown, or maybe Sylaise doesn’t care, for her lips descends, capturing Iwyn’s in a scorching kiss.

“I afraid you won’t find out,” she says when Sylaise pulls away, leveling her voice as best she can. Out of the corner of her eye she can see Solas, he must have returned to the ballroom. His face is impassive, his body rigid.

“Pity.” Sylaise shrugs and bows slightly. “Thank you for the dance.”

Iwyn bows back. “Thank you, Lady Sylaise.”

She makes her way to Solas, his eyes following her the whole way.

“Are you done dancing,” he asks. His tone is icy.

“Yes.” She smiles and arches an eyebrow.

He has no right to be jealous, but he certainly looks it. Or maybe it’s an act, as they are acting. She is suddenly tired of the whole thing and she links her arm in his and steers him towards the corridor they need to investigate. They can get this over with and leave, and he can go back to removing himself from her.

“You can do much better than Sylaise.”

“I’m not interested in Sylaise.”

“Good.”

It’s not busy here, and a cool breeze comes through the open windows along the corridor. A few party guests make their way here, but everyone is looking for privacy. They are close, like lovers looking for their own private time.

“I can’t figure you out, Solas. Do you want me or not? No – I know you want my body, but do you want *me*? What is it that you want? One moment you are running away and acting like you can’t wait to be rid of me, and the next you are jealous of some flirting. Why do you care?”

He stops. Turns to her.

“I love you.”

“What does that mean, Solas? You’ve said it before, and you’ve walked away. It means nothing.”

“I’m sorry. It means – it means I never stopped loving you. I know it is not fair to you. I…” He shakes his head. “I’m sorry.”

“I don’t need your sorries!”

“I know. I’m –” He stops himself and shakes his head. At least he doesn’t apologize for apologizing.

She sighs, and looks out the open window. Her patience is worn thin, and the enjoyment of the party seems a distant memory. There is a garden beyond the window, and she can smell the flowers, rich and cultivated roses. She wants the smell of the sea and dirt and hallas. She looks at the garden as she speaks.

“I love you Solas, but I need more than that. I’m willing to give our love a chance, to find a way forward. I still don’t know if you’re willing to do that, but sorry is not enough.”

“You love me still?” He asks quietly, surprised.

She turns back to him.

“I never stopped. I was waiting for you to find out what you wanted, from the moment you said you’d tell me everything when it was all over. Then here, when you did tell me about you and the orb and more. I was hoping we could move forward, for us to work together and be together. I still think we can. I can see the beauty here, in your world, but there’s beauty in mine too. Destroying everything can’t be the only choice, and I hope you can see that.”

“Iwyn, I – being here is difficult. It makes me remember what we have lost. It makes me remember things I have missed, and things I would rather not have remembered at all. I no longer know what my duty is, or where I belong. But no matter what my path is, I cannot bear to apart from you.”

“Then decide to be with me.”

He kisses her.

It hot and fierce, and then it’s soft. Gentle, like a sigh.

They break apart.

“Solas,” she says. “Iwyn,” he says, and their names intermingle, like a shared draw of their breaths.

They lean against each other, foreheads touching, and he has one hand tangled in her hair.

“What now,” she asks. “What now, Solas?”

“I don’t know. But I know I want to find out with you, rather than without you.”

She smiles and looks up at him. “We will find a way. Our love will find a way. I love you.”

Iwyn stands on her toes and kisses him again, gently on the lips. He opens his eyes and his hand falls to her shoulder, and she steps closer to him, breathes him in. She has missed him, even though he has been near. Now she holds him earnest, and real.

“I’ve missed you,” she says.

“And I have missed you, my heart.”

She kisses his cheek, his throat, and he groans and kisses her ear, causing her to shudder. Everything falls away, just him, here, in her arms willingly. There are entirely too many clothes between them, and she wants to peel them away, to feel his skin next to her. She has missed him so much and all she cares about is his hand, warm and large stroking her back.

There are footsteps in the hall, and she remembers they are not alone. When she looks over Solas’ shoulder, someone lifts an eyebrow and makes a go-on motion, as they glide through the hall.

They’re here for a reason, and she almost forgot.

“Solas. We need to find the study.” She nips his chin, and kisses it. “Later.”

“I know,” he says, and he kisses her again, and runs his hands up her back, over her skin. He toys with the bows at the shoulders.

She grabs his hand and pulls him down the corridor, then down another. With the kissing, no-one would wonder why they are hurrying away, or what they are doing. She hopes it doesn’t backfire, somehow. She wishes they could find an empty space and be as close as she wants to be. She has been waiting and wanting for too long, and the memory of him inside of her is not the same as reality.

“Did you talk about time travel with Dirthamen?” she asks, remembering their conversation from earlier.

“No, I could not turn to that subject without sounding suspicious. It was about plant magic, if you

must know.”

“Really?”

“Dirthamen is a man of many interests. Ah, this is the study, I believe.”

She nods and regards the non-discrepant door. She hopes he is right, and that they can be done quickly.

“Is it warded?”

Solas concentrates and frowns.

“Yes. There is an interesting combination of spells here, one obvious and two hidden in the fade. I didn’t learn this technique until much later.”

“But you do know it now?”

“Yes, I know how to dismantle it without alarm. It requires a good deal of power though. I wonder... Will you allow me to pull on the magic of the anchor? That might work.”

She is reminded that it is *his* magic inside her hand, but she doesn’t mind. Not now. It is better than it belonging to Corypheus, she decides. She doesn’t mind Solas touching the magic either, not at all.

“Do what you need.”

He looks around and checks that the hallway is still deserted, then he grabs her hand. She feels the magic moving through her, familiar and cool. Solas casts. He makes no sound or motion; it is unlike the spells he uses for combat. He mutters something, and nods at her. She can’t feel any difference, there is still magic all around them, but she trusts him. She inspects the lock. Without magic, it’s a fairly simple one, without any trigger traps. She disarms it easily, and they slip inside.

The study is small and dark. Books and strange objects are haphazardly piled on the shelves that line the walls. There are papers strewn on the floor. One cabinet is open, filled with parchments and scrolls and some small jars. Another cabinet is closed. There are two desks, one with stacks of books and more notes, and one which seem to be fairly clean, except for the spilled inkpot. It looks like someone dumped their letters or notes on the floor to save them from the ink, but neglected to clean up.

“We must be quick. I will examine the notes on the tables, if you want to search the cabinets and shelves.”

She nods. She goes to the closed cabinet first, and unlocks it. Inside are more notes, a pair of ornate daggers and some dusty feathers. None of it feels like the artifact at the temple, but she starts looking at the notes, sounding out the words. Elven is not easy for her to read, but this appears to be personal correspondence.

“Twyn,” Solas says, as she is about to lock the cabinet again. “I think this might be worth a look.”

She goes to him, and curiously looks at what he found. It’s a bunch of notes, highly detailed and way too complicated for her to understand. Solas leafs through the pages and shows her a drawing. It looks suspiciously like the device they found in the temple.

“It looks a little like the device? Are these notes about time travel?”

She leans close, because she can.

“Yes. I cannot take this, but I am going to quickly read it. If I concentrate, I should be able to remember most of it.”

“Sounds good. I’ll keep looking for other things.”

She stands on her toes, and kisses him on his cheek. Solas drops the papers and turns and kisses her fully, his lips moving against hers. It’s brief and passionate and makes her heart sing with joy.

She reluctantly let go, though she halfway wants to forget about searching the study, and strip naked and have him, right here on the desk.

Instead, she turns her attention to the shelves. She doubts they will find much more than the notes Solas is studying, but it would be best not to miss anything. They probably can’t get back here easily.

Iwyn runs her fingers along the shelves, briefly looking at all the curious objects. A cat figurine, a small jewel, a piece of wood. There is no order or reason to any of it. None of it sticks out though, until she gets to the lowest shelf. She can smell it or feel it – something is familiar. She remembers the smell in the temple, the weird magic and how it filled the room. This is similar, but all the lowest shelf holds is a large ornamental chalice and lots of paperwork. It’s not until she is crouched all the way down that she notices the small dark and jagged stone half slipped under the shelf.

“Solas. I think I found something.”

He crouches next to her, wrinkles his nose and reaches for it. He stops himself before he picks it up.

“Perhaps this piece dropped when Dirthamen created the artifact?”

“Possible. We should be careful.” Solas pulls a handkerchief out of his pocket, and gently picks up the item. Nothing happens. He slips it into his pocket. “This is a great find. According to the notes, this stone is from a gateway between the fade and abyss, and has some peculiar innate properties.”

Iwyn is hopeful and relieved. The notes, a bit of the item – with luck this means they can find a way to get back. And Solas seems to be willing to meet her, somewhere. Maybe not halfway, but they can work that out later. She smiles. Many things have gone well tonight.

“We should leave. We’ve been away for long, and I’m worrying about pushing our luck.”

Solas nods, and holds on to the papers a little longer, silently moving his lips. Then he places them carefully back in the mess on the desk.

They exit the room while the corridor is empty, lock the door, and Solas raises the magic back up. Iwyn hopes no one will notice anything. What if Dirthamen discover they were there, and the artifact is destroyed, or changed, or never ends up in the temple. Would it create some sort of strange timeloop where they both travelled back in time and didn’t? Best not to think of it, and try to act normal.

Solas leans close, and murmurs in her ear. “We should make ourselves visible, before we leave, to avoid attracting suspicion. Another dance?”

She slips her hand into his. She can get behind another dance, this time with no acting necessary.

Chapter End Notes

Art for this chapter [here](#)! Done by the amazing Galadrieljones!

As always thank you for reading, your comments and you patience.

This chapter was difficult for me to write, and I hope I managed to make it as exciting as I wanted to. Especially thanks to those of my friends who have been listing to all my troubles and complaining, your support is priceless <3.

As a heads up - the next chapter will probably increase the rating to E.

Chapter 8

They're already kissing when they exit the eluvian, embracing as they step through. Solas presses Iwyn against the wall in the antechamber, barely remembering to lock the portal behind them. He has no time for unannounced guests, his only thought getting closer to her, feeling more of her; everything he has denied himself for too long.

She bites his lips and flips them, backing him against the wall, tearing at his shirt.

"Iwyn," he groans, throwing his head back against the wall, sliding his hands down her ass and pulling her close. She kisses his throat and he wants to have her, fast, right here. His hips buck against her. He wants to take it slow, to savor her.

It's his own house, but his bed is close, so he pulls away from the wall, and stills her hand by lacing his fingers through hers.

"Bed."

She nods.

They make their way through the halls, stopping only a few times to kiss. Because they can. Her lips, kissing him. Her eyes, smiling, drawing him in. Her hand in his.

The door to his study falls close behind them with a dull sound, and they face each other. It's quiet now. The urgency has left them, and he suddenly doesn't know what to do. He yearns for her, he craves her touch. It has been so long, and not very long at all. His body, this body of his other self, has no lack of physical intimacy, he knows that. But him, he has missed it for thousands of years. Being with Iwyn, recently, has not made up for the way the way he needs her touch. It was a wonder, and recently it grew familiar enough for him to miss it more, but it was always a wonder still.

And now he doesn't dare to touch her, as if the whole thing is a figment of his imagination. As if he is lost in the fade, and this isn't real. He is far too experienced to really doubt, he knows this is real, but he still has fears. Maybe she will turn around, tell him it is too late.

"Solas," Iwyn says, and reaches for him. She takes his hand. She pulls him towards the other door, into his bedroom. To his bed that they shared without touching, to a place he never knew love before.

"Solas?" she says again, this time a question in her voice. She rarely shows doubt, but he has given her reason enough to, and he takes her into his arms. He kisses her, and all his own doubts are forgotten. Only his need remains.

They are pressed together, and something hard is pressing against his chest.

"Wait," he says. He almost forgot. Iwyn frowns but steps back, and he draws the handkerchief with the strange stone fragment from his chest pocket. He puts it on his desk.

"Will it be safe?" Iwyn asks.

He nods. "No-one enters here without my knowledge." He doesn't trust his people as deeply as he would much later, when he prized loyalty over vanity, but flaws aside, his former self was no fool. This is his bedroom and private study, and no one can enter unless he summons them.

“Good.”

She takes his hand, and he follows willingly. She pulls him into the bedroom, and closes the door. They’re all alone, and behind two closed doors.

They stop before they reach the bed. Iwyn stands on her toes and kisses him, as softly as in Dirthamen’s corridor. He trembles, and maybe she does too. He wants her, and he knows she wants him too. Their bodies know each other, and he wants to sweep her off her feet and make her pleasure his sole focus, to taste every inch of her. And yet he is frozen again, his heart hammering in his chest.

“We can finally make proper use of your ridiculous bed,” Iwyn says and grins.

He laughs too, and he is unfrozen. He starts to undress, removing the fur across his shoulders. Iwyn helps with his tunic, undoing his buttons, kissing his skin when she can.

“Here, let me,” he says, when she fumbles with her dress at the shoulders. The bows part easily under his hand, sealed with a gentle magic she hadn’t noticed. Her sash already undone, and the dress falls to floor and pools around her feet.

She is beautiful, exquisite, a work of art. He tells her, his hands running over her shoulders. Her skin is warm beneath his fingers, warm and present, familiar and new.

Iwyn is not passive, and she pulls at his pants until they slip over his hips. Her hand brushes against his erection and he gasps. She does it again. He grabs her wrists and kisses her.

“I thought you wanted to use the bed?”

She bites his jaw, and she pushes his chest.

“Get in bed then.”

He does, taking two steps backwards and sits down.

“I’m yours, *vhenan*,” he says. He means it, on every level.

Iwyn eyes glitters, her pupils wide. She takes off her underwear, and she prowls towards him.

“Good, *ma lath*” she says and crawls on top of him, sitting on his thighs. She takes his face in her hands and kisses him. Tongue and lips and need and a hint of teeth.

He groans and grabs her ass and presses them together, his erection trapped between them. He needs her, he needs the friction and he bucks against her.

“Solas,” she hisses, as he topples them backwards, her on top of him. She kisses him again, and she wants him, and their bodies are close, so close.

He should slow down, pleasure her, make her come again and again, carefully, slowly, but she kisses his neck, his chest, and she pinches his nipples and his thoughts scatters.

“Iwyn, Iwyn, I should... I’m not going to last like this.”

She sits up and she locks her eyes with his.

“I want you Solas. Like this. Now.”

She grinds against him, moaning, and he nods. They're both done waiting.

Iwyn lifts herself up, and then brings herself slowly down on him. They both groan. His fingers move to where they're joined, and he slides them between her folds, teasing her. She moves slowly, at first, both of them feeling each other, their eyes locked. He loves her, and he breathes, and he feels alive.

Then she moves faster, and it feels so good, and his fingers can't find the right spot any more, so he gives up and grabs her ass and digs his fingers in. They both move faster and frantically, months of yearning finally over, and it's not elegant and he doesn't care.

Iwyn doesn't care either, moaning and moving, her own hand between them now, the other splayed on his chest. She clenches around him, and he can't hold himself back, coming and coming, rushing across his peak.

She collapses on top of him, and he folds his arms around her, not ready to let go, he needs to feel her. She isn't heavy, but she grounds him, especially here, in all this empty splendor.

Eventually, she kisses him and rolls off and stretches, and curls back into him. He kisses her head, and runs his hand over her body. With a thought, he cleans up the mess.

"I've missed you, *ma lath*," she says. It's a whisper, a love against his shoulder. It's his fault, but his feelings of regret are mingled with the joy of certainty, a certainty that had a price. He knows his path is with her now.

"And I've missed you, *vhenan*," he replies. "Quite a bit. I feel like I should apologize for the – ah – briefness. I could rectify that. In a bit."

Iwyn laughs a little and kisses his skin, softly.

"No need. I'm worn out, really. It's been a long night already." She raises herself on her elbow and looks him in the eye. "And we'll have more time later, right. We're –"

"Yes," he says. "Yes. I mean it Iwyn, *vhenan*. What may come, I want to find a way to face it with you. I am not going to leave again."

They might not have forever, but they have time. He has time with her.

He holds her closer, and they fall asleep.

The next morning, Iwyn is already awake when he wakes, but she has not left the bed. He kisses her shoulder, and buries himself deeper under the blanket, closer to her.

"Good morning," she says.

He mumbles in return, and holds her close, not fully ready to leave the fade, and not ready for her to leave his bed.

Iwyn stays, her hands wandering over his body. Reality soon draws him fully awake.

This time, they take their time, exploring each other bodies, unhurried and lazy, but still urgent. He brings her to her climax with his hands and his mouth, and Iwyn does the same to him. T

Spent and hungry, they leave the bed much later, when the sun is high in the sky.

After breakfast, or lunch really, Iwyn goes work out, while he stays to study the fragment of the artifact and write down his notes from their investigation last night. The most important outcome was unexpected, or maybe not at all; his path already changed the moment he first held her hand. That doesn't mean their research is forgotten, nor the importance of it.

He hums to himself as he starts his work.

He has lost track of time when Iwyn returns. He has notes and diagrams scatted across his desk. The fragment is right in front of him, as he documents its magic vibrations. Iwyn is sweaty, but he doesn't mind when she kisses him. He doesn't mind at all, but she is already gone, taking a bath.

He looks at the doorway she passed through, marveling at the ease of it all. A simple gesture, a promise of returning to discuss. How natural it feels to share with her, to share his life. He is at ease, and he can see now how their lives can fit together. A solved puzzle.

First though, they have to return to the right time. He has some theories, and even more unanswered questions. He has already wished Dorian was here several times, so he could lend his expertise on time travel. This surprises Solas too, but it shouldn't. He has become quite at home among everyone in the Inquisition.

While Iwyn doesn't have Dorian's theoretical background, her mind is sharp and when she joins him, he tells of what he uncovered so far, and her own questions and observations help his own thoughts along.

They spend several days on research. The lump of material is magic, but resistant to anything he knows of time magic. It's curious and fascinating, and only slightly frustrating – he can't ask any of his friends, afraid of revealing too much which could be told his other self – who will presumably be back here, soon.

It's also quiet – just him and Iwyn, spending time together, with very few interruptions. Different than the stolen moments they'd had before, moments he felt he should cling to as they would soon crumble away. Now his doubt is gone, and he has pushed away the inevitability of destruction. He takes advantage of that.

He never quite knew, how it would be to simply love and be loved, and he has never been surer of anything than he is of his future with Iwyn.

They have learned a lot of things in their research, but there is still a missing piece he doesn't understand. He finally realizes an evening when they are having dinner on the Western balcony. It's getting dark and one moon is a sliver in the sky. Iwyn is sitting in his lap, a glass of wine in her hand.

"It's the moons," he says.

"The moon?"

"Both of them." It's clear to him now. "They influence the time aspect of the stone's property that it lends from the Abyss. They need to be in alignment, pulling and pushing the tide. I think I know how to calculate it – I will need to do this on paper, to be certain – but I should be able to find the right time."

"The right time to activate it? So we can go home?" Iwyn turns her head towards him, sitting half up in excitement.

“Yes. I think if we do it at the right time, the spell will work, and we will be pulled back to the artifact in our own time.”

“Really? The issues you were concerned about, with the magic field interference disruptions, is this the answer to that?”

“Yes. I need to verify, or course, but if I account for the changes in magic with the moons, it should work.”

“I hope you’re right,” Iwyn says, and kisses him. She sounds a little apprehensive, and he understands. They have made slow progress, and he knows how much she wants to go home.

“Even if this is not the answer, we will still find it.”

He will, for her.

Solas scribbles down the initial formulas when they get back to his study, and he is more certain than before. In addition, the alignment will be soon, within the next week. Iwyn is delighted, and he only feels a small stab of worry. How will he feel, when he returns the world with the veil?

Iwyn kisses each of his fingers, and he forgets his worry.

The next day, he goes over his calculations in detail. Seven days from now, there will be a time window which will allow them to leave. It should be straight forward. Touch the stone fragment, activate the magic, and hope the artifact in their own time will answer.

This leaves a few other issues on his mind.

First of all, they need to ensure everything is seamless when they leave, that when his other self comes back, no one will ask about Iwyn.

He suggests she leaves, to command they outpost they said she was commanding. Making the lie a truth. The outpost is obscure enough, and when she goes ‘missing’ someone else will take over, and no one will notice. She should go without him, and he can act like he tired of her. He will join here there a few days later, in time for the proper time window for the spell.

He knows he will miss her terribly, but their future will make up for that.

Iwyn reluctantly agrees. She is not certain she can assume command of the outpost, even if it is only for a few days. He knows it is not a problem.

There is another problem. The anchor. This has been nagging his mind, just like the magic of it is always there, nudging his own magic, foreign and yet not foreign at all.

“I’m worried about the anchor,” he says. There is no way to hide it. “It was never meant to go inside a person.”

“What do you mean?”

He gets up, and walks, turning from her where they’ve been sitting. He folds his hands behind his back. He paces.

“The magic of the orb – of *my* orb, was never meant to be leave the it. After I raised the veil, I

locked away much of my own power inside the orb. It is a focus, and a storage or well for magic, if you will. When I woke from uthenera, I did not have enough power to open it, to access that well of magic. I let the orb fall into Corypheus' hands, expecting him to die in the process of opening it, leaving the magic still inside the orb ready for me to use."

"But I grabbed the orb."

"You did, and while there was still was an explosion – I do deeply regret he chose to do it with so many innocent people around – somehow Corypheus survived, and the magic embedded itself in your hand. I suspect there is but a remnant of power left in the foci."

"So why does Corypheus keep carrying it around?"

He smiles mirthlessly. "I don't think he realizes."

Iwyn flexes her hand, and frowns. "So my hand is like... a well of power, now?"

"Correct. And it was never meant to be. The power will destroy flesh and bone and spirit alike."

"You've known this all along." He can feel her withdraw, a coldness in her voice.

"I never made a secret of it's danger. I was able to stabilize it. I never knew how long it would last. I had hoped if I was able to obtain the orb, I could somehow stabilize it further or funnel the power back. But now – "

He goes to her, and sits on the floor before her, taking her hand into his, and kissing it.

"Now, the magic has entwined itself deeper within you, merged with your own magic. With the veil in place I fear I will not be able to do anything about it. And I'm no longer willing to accept that."

"I'm sure we can figure something out," she says, looking at their entwined hands.

He sits himself besides her on the couch, and keeps holding her hand.

"I have already thought of something. Here, I can use my magic, together with yours, to push the anchor to the surface, dampen and contain it further. I will create reference points, if you will, for me to hold onto later. Then I can use the reference points to siphon the magic into the foci, when we take it from Corypheus."

"I need the magic, though. To close rifts when we get back, and to lead the Inquisition."

"You will still be able to close rifts, until we remove it."

"And what of after? There will still be so many things to do, so many ways Thedas needs the Inquisition."

"They will follow you with or without the anchor, *vhenan*."

He is certain. She is already a symbol, but that is no longer important. Her leadership skills are obvious, and her personality and diplomacy has won people over. They will follow her, if they need her. He hopes she is wrong about the need for the Inquisition. Such organizations cannot last forever, but he doesn't think it will help to bring this up now.

"I'll need to think about it. Will it take long to do?"

“It requires almost no preparation. We can wait.” He understands her hesitation, but the more he dwells on it, the more urgent it feels. “The choice is yours, but I want you to be safe. Loosing you...”

He doesn't get to finish his sentence; Iwyn kisses him fiercely, and he responds in kind. There is no more talk of the anchor.

A day later, they start their plan. He briefs her on the outpost, and the command structure – nothing complicated. She picks her favorite of the bows in his mansion, and fits an armor. She looks powerful and magnificent in it. Enough to make him want to strip it off her.

“I'm worried,” she says, standing before the eluvian. “I'm no commander here.”

“You will do fine. You are already a commander, and this is no different.”

“I hope so.”

“I'll miss you,” she says. “Promise me you'll be there. That we'll go home.”

“I promise.”

He kisses her one final time, and she takes a deep breath, stands tall, and walks through the eluvian.

Chapter 9

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

It's four days later, and Iwyn has almost forgotten Solas is supposed to show up. She has been deep in battle for two days, and she isn't sure why word hasn't reached Solas. Magic be damned, something must have held up her message.

Or maybe it's politics.

She is doing the best she can, pretending she understands how Solas runs his army, how the outpost works, and who attacked them and why. She is pretty sure she isn't fooling anyone, but then again it isn't so different from the first days of Haven, when Cassandra and Leliana and Cullen and Josephine wanted her to make decisions and talk to nobles and fight her way through a magic ridden battlefield.

She wishes the four of them were here.

She wishes Solas was here, and that's how she remembers he's supposed to be, according to their plan.

She looks at the eluvian, dark and inert. It's not that she worries, not really, she tells herself. But she sent word of the attack as soon as it occurred, when battle-ready elves poured out of the woods two days ago, and she has yet not heard from Solas.

The eluvian here is locked to all but him, to prevent problems if the garrison is overrun, and the one in the mansion is locked down also. She has learned that the eluvian network is split up between Elvhenan nobles, with each have access to their own portals. Each branch is secured, the access tightly controlled and unbreakable.

There are some spirits in Solas service, and they have means of delivering messages fast, or so she thought. She asked one to contact him, but she has no idea if he received her message. She has not heard from him or the spirit. With one last look at the mirror behind her, she leaves the room and walks to the battlements.

It's just past dawn, and the battle has yet not started in earnest. There are enemies beyond, in the woods. She doesn't really understand why they're attacking the outpost. There are some politics, of course, and she has been nodding and saying the right things when the other officers here have explained, but it's very foreign to her. Humans attack the Dalish because of hate and fear. Fereldens and Orlesians goes to war over border territory. The Qun attacks to bring everyone under their yoke. But this attack is factions of elves – and she is not used to killing other elves, not at all – waging war under a banner not their own, while their lords attend parties with canapes in Arlathan.

She doesn't need to understand why, she isn't going to solve their problems. She just has to make sure everyone here is ready, so she makes her rounds and checks the positions and says some encouraging words. This she can do.

Soon after, the battle is upon them. She sends arrow after arrow over the battlement, raining fire on the attackers below. Jarlana beside her holds a barrier steady, deflecting most of the incoming missiles and magic. They still have to be alert, as occasionally something pierces it, and she has to deflect it herself or shield Jarlana, who needs much more focus and energy to work her magic.

After two days of battle, they work smoothly together, magic and archery and more magic.

There is movement below, and it's different than the usual patterns of their enemies. She nods at Jarlana, and sprints sideways and finds Kareen. They're slinging blocks of stone over the wall with their magic, sweat gathering at their temple.

"Kareen! Something is happening – can I get your opinion? I think we need to reinforce the gate."

Kareen is a commander here, with a keen mind and easy to get along with. Their insight will help, and Iwyn thinks their telekinesis might be able to counter the new threat.

Kareen nods, and turn their attention to the battlefield, concentrating on the enemies moving below.

"You're right. Something is up. I don't like it. I'll deal with it."

They nod again, and drop down to the courtyard. Iwyn returns to the Jarlana, and her bow, and her uneasy feeling growing. She can hear Kareen's magic stacking up barrels and bricks against the door. Good.

There is a dull sound below, and the sense of hostile magic.

Again.

Again.

It suddenly stops, and they have not broken through.

A wolf howls, but it doesn't sound like a wolf at all. She can hear it in her bones, and it does not scare her. Around her, everyone stops fighting, and her bow is lowered too. Iwyn looks over the battlements, and the enemies are scattered. A black shadow hunts them, a large wolf with glowing blue eyes.

Solas, she realizes. She doesn't know how she knows, but she does. She hadn't thought the Dread Wolf a real thing, but he is there, hunting the battlefield, scattering his foes. She is frozen, staring at the impossibility of all of it. The wolf howls, the enemies run. He swipes at one, pushing the elf out of his path. The enemy crumbles behind him, and the wolf continues.

Iwyn shakes herself out of it. She should really expect anything at this point. She hurries down to the courtyard. Kareen is wiping sweat from their brow, and already ordering men to unbar the gate.

Once it swings open, the wolf walks through. The battlefield beyond is silent.

"My Lord," Kareen says.

Iwyn is too stunned to say anything. The wolf is large, but no larger than a normal wolf could be. Its presence makes up for that though. Its eyes are glowing, and she can feel the magic emanating from it. It moves and swirls around the wolf, and with her next breath it changes, and then Solas stands before her, brimming with power.

"Kareen, Iwyn. Thank you. I came as fast as I could. I believe I have a general understanding of the situation, but please brief me on the details."

"Yes, my Lord," Kareen says, and Iwyn remembers to echo them. Here she is just another commander and she should act as such.

The briefing is difficult. She wants to step into Solas arms, she wants to make sure he is safe, and she wants to ask him about his shapeshifting. She thought the wolf metaphorical, or maybe a way he would appear in the Fade. Instead, she pretends she already knew, just as she pretends they aren't lovers.

It turns out her missive were intercepted, and that Solas was kept in the city as part of the plot. The attack is some political ploy, as she expected, and she can't be bothered to follow all the nuances, but in the end Solas took care of what he needed to do in Arlathan, and then holding this outpost foiled the attackers. There is some fallout to deal with – who to blame and when to do it, and what to pretend never happened. Kareen will take care of the items here at the outpost, and Solas drafts some missives, already putting the plans into action.

Later, once the keep is asleep, Solas shows up in Iwyn's room.

"*Vhenan*," he says.

"*Ma lath*," she says and she is in his arms. He kisses her hair, and he doesn't let go, and neither does she.

"I am sorry I could not arrive before. I was afraid – I am relieved to see you."

"I'm relieved to see you too."

He loosens his grip, just enough so he can look at her face.

"I had to deal with the situation in Arlathan, and that was not a coincidence. Andruil's pettiness knows no bounds, but it is hardly a surprise to me. I had just forgotten this would happen right now – all of this was unimportant in hindsight."

"You're here now, and we held the post."

"You did. Thank you."

She leans her head on his broad chest. She missed him.

"Is everything ready for tomorrow?"

"Yes. I have the stone, and the precise time. We will leave the outpost in Kareen's capable hands, and set out. It should be easy to find a quiet spot to work the magic."

"Good."

Iwyn is nervous. The last few days have been too adrenaline-fueled for her to really think about what's next, but now Solas is here, and she is safe in his arms. She hopes the ritual will work. She hopes the Inquisition is still standing when they get back. She hopes she can defeat Corypheus. That she can do what she must with the anchor changed, that it's safe to remove it; though maybe she doesn't want it removed at all. She hopes everything isn't different, somehow. She hopes that Solas doesn't change his mind again, and she clings to him a little harder.

"Have you thought about the mark?" he asks.

“I haven’t had time to think, really.”

He kisses her.

“I apologize. I wish I could have been here sooner, that you would not have been stuck in this battle.”

“You came.” She thinks of it, of the power that swept the battlefield. “A wolf, *vhenan*? I never thought it was literal. You didn’t think to tell me?”

“It never really seemed relevant. It is not that I would have kept it a secret. I would have told you when there were no other, more important things to discuss.”

“Is it normal, for elves here to shapeshift? I know some magic users do, but it’s not common.”

“The shapeshifting is a... family quirk I inherited from my grandparents. The magic is different from what most mages use for shapeshifting, and unrelated to my other magic. I can, however, combine the powers and still use magic in wolf form, if I need.”

“Can you do that to Corypheus’ army? And him?”

“Unfortunately, no. My shapeshifting ability is innate, and not affected by the veil, but the rest of my magic is. I wish I could though. I wish you wouldn’t have to fight him.”

“So do I, but I’ll do what I have to. I can handle battle.”

“I know.” He kisses her. “You are magnificent. When I saw you on the battlements, all I wanted to do was to rush to you.”

He couldn’t, since they’re pretending their relationship ended. From one extreme to the other. She likes it though, the thought of him coming for her and the thought grows and blooms in her heart.

“You’re here now,” she says.

They kiss again, and it’s deeper and full of need. She needs him, now that he is here and safe.

“Undress,” she says.

He is still wearing armor, but his magic makes quick work of it, unbuckling and undoing. Soon he only wears a soft tunic and pants, his armor in a pile of gold and furs on the floor.

Like this, he looks a lot more like he is hers, like the man who reads books and walks the fade. Not a fearsome and powerful god, not someone who can level a battlefield. Just a man, who takes her into his arms, and kisses her. He wants to protect her, but she wants to protect him too, so he doesn’t have to wear his armor, or wield his magic as a weapon.

Soon they are both naked, skin to skin, and they fall onto the bed. She loses track of where she ends and he begins, their bodies entwined. She loves him, and he is here, and they find each other.

“I love you,” she says after, resting her head on his shoulder.

He holds her tighter. “I love you too. Iwyn – I’ve been a fool. I could have –”

She stops him, with a finger on his lips. What is done is in the past, and she is just happy he is here, with her now. He came for her, and he will go back with her.

“Shhh. We have a whole future together.”

“We do.” His eyes are bright with unshed tears, and she buries her head in the crook of his neck, too overcome with emotions herself.

They stay like this a while longer, simply holding on to each other. Her heart is too full to speak, and she doesn’t need to. She knows the truth of their future.

“If our ruse is to be kept, I have to leave,” Solas says a while later. He draws patterns on her skin, and she doesn’t want him to leave. Soon he doesn’t have to though, so reluctantly she gets up and pulls him along.

They dress, and discuss the plans for the next day, the cover they will invent so they can leave, and where and how they will meet. With a brief kiss, Solas quietly slips out.

It’s late afternoon the next day when Solas leaves through the eluvian. The enemies are scattered, and he says he returning to Arlathan. In reality, he will double back and meet her outside the fortress in the forest.

Iwyn leaves too, presumably to search the forest for stray enemies. A perfect cover, and when she doesn’t return, they will assume she was lost or killed. With a last look back, she leaves the outpost behind.

The woods are not that different, this many years in the past. She feels the soft moss under her feet, she hears the sound of the animals and the wind rustling the leaves. All are a familiar comfort; she is at home here. Some things don’t change, and a forest is a forest. She finds her way easily enough, and reaches the clearing Solas had told her about.

He is already there, in his armor. He turns and smiles at her, and reaches for her. It is easy to step into his embrace.

“Let us eat before we work the magic. The moons need to be up.”

“Sounds good.”

He unwraps a bundle with bread and cheese and honey. She sits on the forest floor next to him, the evening sun bathing everything in a golden light. She leans her head on his shoulder. She thinks about Jarlana and Kareen, back at the fortress. They will not come looking yet, but tomorrow they will. She wishes she could have told them proper goodbye, and not to worry for her. She liked them, she liked fighting beside them. She has only just met them, but as soon as you do combat with someone, you get close.

“I was wondering about Kareen and Jarlana. Do you know what happens to them?”

Solas frowns, and she regrets asking, and then maybe not. She needs to know.

“Jarlana... I don’t remember. I think she will be lost in some battle, some years from now.”

“I’m sorry. I liked her.” Losses happen, and she doesn’t know what she had expected. That she settled down and had children and lived happily?

“Kareen – they were loyal to the end, and valuable commander and ally. They went in uthenara before I raised the veil. I don’t know if I can wake them, or others, with the veil still in place.”

Solas looks away, and a heaviness settles over them. He must have many friends lost to time like this. She takes his hand in hers.

“You should do the thing you wanted to do with the anchor. Maybe, if we can put it back in the orb, we can do... something. We will find a way.”

“Thank you, *vhenan*.”

He reaches for her hand, and she pauses.

“Without the anchor – do you truly think the humans will let me lead them? That they won’t turn on me, when everything is done?”

“I do not know for sure. But I know that you have loyal friends, and they do not support you because of the anchor.”

“Thank you.”

She puts her hand in his, and he squeezes, gentle and comforting. She still worries.

“You know you can always lead me.” Solas smirks, and his eyes are full of promises.

She laughs a little and kisses him.

“Go ahead then.”

It’s quick and she can barely feel a difference. The magic is still there, underneath the surface. She’s a little relieved. She will still have the anchor until the process is complete. When they have the orb.

Solas looks a little strained, and she doesn’t know if it’s because it’s difficult, or because he longs for the power, or something else entirely. She doesn’t ask. This is not a discussion they need right now.

“Done?” she asks, to be sure. Solas nods.

“Is it time for the next part?”

He nods again, and takes the fragment out of his pocket, placing carefully on a flat stone in front of them. It looks like an ordinary piece of rock, nothing magical at all. She desperately hopes this works, and reaches for his hand again. He pulls her close and looks into her eyes.

“Iwyn. No matter what happens, we have each other. You have me, *vhenan*.”

His earnestness shakes her and comforts her. She believes him.

“Keep holding my hand,” he says, and steps away from her.

She does, as he faces the tiny piece of rock, and looks to the sky. She looks up too, the moon bright beyond the dark branches of the trees. She can’t see the other moon, but Solas says it’s there, in the right place.

She feels his magic, it builds and it builds and it builds, and she looks back at him. The magic

pours out of him, or into him. His eyes are silver, too bright for her to look at, smoke rising from them and stretching towards the moon. The rock rises from its resting place, engulfed in silver-bright magic, moving and twirling. A blackness form above it, and Solas' magic retreats.

She smells burnt mushrooms.

Solas reaches for the rock.

Darkness consumes her.

Chapter End Notes

Thanks for reading <3 <3

Chapter 10

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

“This better fucking work.”

Dorian is pacing, his boots splashing in the two inches of water.

“They better fucking do the right thing.”

Splash. Splash. Splash.

They’re back in Dirthamen’s temple, and he is convinced this is the only way to pull Iwyn and Solas back through time. Forward through time. Whichever, if it is at all possible.

They were too late stopping the *idiot* elf who decided to tamper with unknown magic, and too late to stop Iwyn throwing herself after Solas. Both of them are idiots. He looks at Solas prone body, lying on the carrier. Cassandra stands guard as if he is a fallen Seeker, or something. Do they do vigils? It seems a very Seeker like thing to do.

“Calm, down Dorian. Untrained as he is, Solas is not without intelligence. In either case, we have to wait for the alignment.” Vivienne is calmly waiting by the artifact.

“If my theory is correct – and of course it is correct, Solas is not ‘untrained’. He is, most likely, very, very trained.”

It is impossible, but the only explanation for the elf not travelling through time, like Iwyn, is that he exists in both places. Which means he is over 5000 years old, which is impossible, which means his body should have travelled through time, which it didn’t.

Splash. Splash. Splash. Splash.

Elves used to be immortal. Used to be.

It is highly likely that his information is incorrect.

None of that actually explains why Solas appears to be passed out, and unable to wake up. Thankfully he has been able to drink some water, but they can only do so much. His should have woken up, his past self confused, but present.

Hopefully, Solas can explain all this to them later, once he is awake and back.

Splash. Splash. Splash.

“Dorian, my dear, calm yourself. All of this is highly improbable, but if your theory is right, then the calculations are sound. The moons will align in shortly.”

“You’re right. I know.”

Vivienne had done him the favor of working on the calculations, even if she disagreed on his premise. She might even have caught a small calculation error.

“Let us begin,” he says.

He stops, and nods to Cassandra, who steps outside. He moves Solas' hand and places it carefully on the artifact. Then he reaches with his magic, and touch the energy embedded in it. Vivienne puts up a barrier in front of them (she is, frankly, better at them than him), and then she joins her magic to his.

They wait. Their magic builds, bouncing off the artifact, until it sucks it in. He takes an involuntary step forward. The barrier holds. He can feel the magic, time itself stretching like a punch to his gut. It smells unpleasant too.

There is a pop, less of a noise than the absence of noise, and the room goes dark.

"Solas!" Iwyn says, and Dorian draws a breath of relief.

Vivienne lights a veilfire lantern, bathing the room in a green glow again. Iwyn is halfway on top of Solas, her hands on his shoulders. Solas hand has slipped from the artifact. Dorian ends the casting before another accidents occurs, and he is thankful that Vivienne keeps the barrier up, as the magic innate to the object lashes out violently before it disappears.

"Solas," Iwyn says again, and he mumbles something, his eyes fluttering rapidly. She kisses him. That's new – or new again, he supposes.

Solas tries to sit up, but realizes he can't. Dorian rushes to help him sit – the man has been in a coma for far too many days, so he really should take it easy.

"Dorian!" Iwyn exclaims, and half hugs him, even as they hold on to Solas. She looks around for the first time, and calls for Vivienne, who rushes over. Iwyn hugs her too, tightly, and then Cassandra.

"I'm so glad to see you all. You've no idea."

Dorian has some idea, and he wants to confirm his theories, he needs to know where they traveled to, so he can understand why. For now though, Iwyn is concerned about Solas, who is drinking, slowly, from a water canteen offered by Cassandra.

"No more," Cassandra says. "You will throw up. You have been in a coma for several days."

"How many?" Iwyn asks sharply.

Dorian has lost count a little, late nights research bleeding into one another. He knows what day today is, precisely and correctly calculated so he could bring them back.

"Four," Cassandra answers.

Iwyn frowns. "That makes no sense at all – it should more than double of that."

"There are several ways that could be explained, once you consider what is possible. What we've experienced is --" Solas stops abruptly, coughing and sputtering. He reaches for the water again.

"We can figure it out later," Iwyn says. She runs her hand down Solas' back in a soothing motion. She looks at the others in the room. "We've traveled through time. I hope we aren't back too late, that Corypheus hasn't destroyed everything."

"Not yet," Cassandra replies.

"I knew it," Dorian says, feeling vindicated. Not that he doubted his own calculations, but others

were highly doubtful this trip would yield results.

“Solas was here, all the time? In a coma? What about me?” Iwyn asks, suddenly realizing.

“You disappeared in a puff of smoke, while Solas here collapsed on the ground. Quite surprising, I should say, almost an impossibility. Almost.” Dorian looks at Solas, who meets his gaze evenly.

“Let’s get out of this damp hellhole, and then you can tell how fuck that is even possible. I think you got some explaining to do, Solas.”

Solas has to lean on Iwyn when they leave, his body weak from disuse. The veil presses down on him too, heavy and dense. It is like moving through fog, after breathing magic freely for days. It is no wonder his younger self struggled to wake. Safer for everyone too, he supposes.

He will have to tell the truth about himself to everyone, he realizes. Iwyn would not want to keep it a secret, and Dorian has already figured out some of it. It doesn’t scare him, not with Iwyn’s arm firm around him, but he doesn’t know where to begin. Right now, however, Iwyn requests an end to everyone’s questioning, and says they will tell more later. Solas is grateful. He is too tired and dizzy to handle that right now.

The trip back to the camp is brief, they are set up just outside the ruins. They are greeted warmly by scout Harding, who hugs them both. He is relieved Iwyn and him succeeded, that they are back whole and alive, yet his worry grows with each friendly smile. How will everyone treat him once the truth is revealed?

“We will return to Skyhold tomorrow,” Cassandra says.

Everyone voices their agreement, and he is grateful to sit and eat while Iwyn asks about the state of the Inquisition and Corypheus. Preparations have not stopped while they have been absent, and they will soon be ready to face him, though the majority of the Inquisition forces are still returning from the Arbor Wilds.

“I’m sure you will get much more through and endlessly boring information about the war from our dear Commander and Josephine when we get back,” Dorian says, interrupting Cassandra’s, Harding’s and Iwyn’s estimation of troop movement. “I want to know what happened to you. Not just to confirm the brilliance of my calculations, of course. Are you feeling alright, my friends?”

“Your calculations were guesswork at best, Pavus. You are all fortunate I was able to correct them,” Vivienne says.

Solas smiles, and hides it. The more he thinks about it, the more he realizes how lucky they all were, each reaching a similar conclusion, and using similar magic use at the right time. He is looking forward to a detailed discussion, but that will be later. For now, he lets Iwyn tell their story.

She tells how they arrived, and of her confusion. It is fascinating to hear how she experienced Arlathan at first, what she noticed and what she thought. There is wonder in her voice as she describes the beauty and the magic, many details he barely noticed. How quickly he got used to the excess and the splendor. When she mentions Solas was already known to the people there, she falters, and she does not mention he is Fen’Harel. A title and being that has little meaning to these people, he supposes. No one notices the gaps in her story, however, as Dorian leaps to his feet with

a shout.

“I knew it!” He starts pacing, pointing his fingers at Solas. “The reason your body was here, and hers wasn’t, was that you can’t exist in two places! I was right!”

“I believe you are correct, Dorian. The device caused my consciousness to travel through time, but not my body.”

“The elves were immortal. You’re one of them,” Cassandra states.

“Yes.” He cannot deny it.

She narrows her eyes and looks between him and Iwyn. “Are there others? You cannot be the only one?”

A threat assessment. He does not blame her. He is an unknown.

“Abelas and his sentinels are like me, somewhat, though they are bound the temple.” He is released from his duty, and he is floating, anchorless, was it not for Iwyn’s hand in his. “I awoke from uthenera, the long sleep, just recently. I know of others still sleeping in the endless dream, but none that are awake as I.”

He can see the questions forming in everyone’s eyes, but Iwyn cuts them off.

“This is a long story; we can go into those details later.” Iwyn squeezes his hand, and he is grateful.

“For now, let us briefly tell how we found a way home,” Iwyn continues, and she tell of the stone fragment, the calculations and the moons.

This turns the discussions back to math and magic, to the work Dorian and Vivienne had done here. It is interesting and barely scratches the surface of everything he wants to know, but soon he is exhausted and cannot hide a yawn.

“I think we need to sleep. You have all the time to discuss tomorrow, on the journey to Skyhold,” Iwyn says, and that is how it is.

They have no need for words as they go to the tent and curl up next to each other, falling asleep hand in hand.

When they arrive in Skyhold, Solas is mostly recovered, and the strength has returned to his body. He still misses magic flowing freely without the veil, but he will get used to that again.

As soon as they set foot in Skyhold, Josephine ushers them into her office, and the entire inner circle follows them. Cullen looks equally relieved and concerned. Morrigan tries – and fails – to look aloof. Him, Iwyn, Dorian, Vivienne and Cassandra are weary and dusty from travel, but there is no respite. Everyone is looking for explanations, and they have to repeat their story.

Iwyn still does not reveal his true identity. He suspects Morrigan would understand some of what it means, but there would still be so much to explain. Iwyn does not mention the orb either, that it is his or what it means. She is protecting him, he thinks, and he doesn’t know how he feels about it. Or maybe she just doesn’t think it is anyone’s business. Neither of them are sure of what happens after they kill Corypheus. Maybe she worries about what happens with inquisition after, or she does not want to complicate matters. The orb, and its origin are tied to his own.

She keeps close when she talks, and prompts for input, which he gladly gives. Her hand rests on his back, and he is suddenly overwhelmed with love, so much the conversation turns to a blur. Cullen worrying and frowning, Josephine curious and inquisitive, Varric not so subtly probing about their relationship.

Later, much later, after the drinks Bull suggested they all get in the tavern, after everyone has come by to ensure Iwyn is alive, they head back to the main hall.

Iwyn pauses in front of the doorway to the rotunda, which also leads up to the hallway beyond where his quarters are. She lets go of his hand, and he is cut loose.

“Iwyn?”

“Solas, I –” her eyes are big and dark, and he regrets his third glass of wine. “I don’t know what we... We’re home. I’m home, and we’re – Do you want to come up? With me.”

Yes. He has made up his mind, and there is no reason for her to doubt. Not anymore.

“Yes,” and this time he says it, though for some reason his throat is dry, his voice almost gone. He steps closer, and he kisses her, bends her over as he tastes the sweetness of her lips.

“Come, then,” she says when he lets go, and she leads him up the stairs.

He follows.

They almost don’t make it all the way up to the room, desperate to feel each other, and they’re already half undressed when they fall into bed. There are no words between them, and they don’t need them. This is familiar territory. Her hands on his skin, the curve of her spine, and her weight on top of him. They make love, and it is not the first time and not the last time.

After, they lie entwined in the bed, relishing the sated closeness of their bodies.

“How are you?” she asks. “Do you feel – do you feel home here, or do you miss your home?”

His hands wander over her body, her skin soft under his palms. He thinks about the veil, the magic, and the orb. He thinks about blood splattered on a silver floor.

“I’m home right now,” he says, and he means it.

The next day, they are already planning their next step, busy in the war room. Cullen moves a marker to indicate how close their troops are, and where Corypheus’ have been spotted. Josephine reads a letter from a noble requesting assistance. Solas would much rather go spend time with Dorian and Vivienne to fully untangle the time travel, but he is stuck here during calculations in his head. Iwyn wanted him here, in case there were more questions, and he is of course happy to support her.

“Is there any way we can send a polite refusal?” Iwyn asks. “No matter how much people think I’m the Herald of Andraste, I don’t think it is appropriate for me to perform a wedding.”

“If we arrange for the... disappearance of a minor noble, we could simply refuse based on security concerns,” Leliana says.

“I don’t think –”

Green light flares, pulsing from the outside. Everyone is frozen, quiet. Iwyn walks to the window, and looks out and up.

“The Breach.”

The room erupts in activity, shouts and running, cursing and clenched fists. Solas steps closer to Iwyn, running his hand down her back, as she turns back to the room.

“Corypheus is at the Temple of Sacred Ashes. We have to fight him. We must go now.”

“The troops –” Cullen starts to say, and Iwyn cuts him off.

“They won’t matter. His army is stuck too. He is here to fight me, personally.”

She is right, and Cullen nods.

“Are you ready, Lady Morrigan?” Iwyn asks.

“Leave the dragon to me. ‘Tis I can promise you.”

“Let’s move out, then. I will close the breach.” Iwyn looks at all of them, regal and powerful.

“Whatever happens, I’m grateful to have met you all. We will make through, my friends.”

As everyone leaves the room, Iwyn pulls him aside.

“Solas...”

He kisses her.

“*Ar lath ma*,” he says. He has nothing else to say. She will fight Corypheus, and she will win. He doesn’t know what will happen to the orb. They will fight, and he cannot predict the future. They cling together, desperately, and then reluctantly they let go.

“Let’s get ready,” Iwyn says. “Tell Cole and Dorian. I will find the others.”

He nods. The time has come.

Chapter End Notes

Thank you all for reading, and for your patience <3.

Chapter 11

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

They manage to kill Corypheus, but just barely. The fight was a blur, but he is dead, stricken down alongside his dragon. She somehow manages to catch the orb when it falls from Corypheus' hand, and now it buzzes against her hand, her left arm in agony. She collapses around it.

"Iwyn," Solas calls and rushes to her. He was beside her the whole fight, his barriers keeping her safe. Safer. She thinks she is bleeding, but she doesn't know where. Solas has a trickle of blood flowing from his mouth, and she tries to wipe it away. It just smears.

"Iwyn," he says again.

"The orb – my hand. It hurts. Something's wrong."

He shakes his head.

"The mark seeks the orb. It is not wrong, but could be dangerous, or cause more pain." His hands are around hers and the orb, resting on it. "Can I – can I remove it now? The mark."

She has made up her mind already, but it's sudden. All her doubts are there, and adrenaline still rushes through her veins. Is she ready to give up the mark? Corypheus is dead, but there are still rifts out there. And she has no idea what will happen to the Inquisition, or to her, now. Her leg hurts too. Maybe that's where the blood is from. Did Solas get hit? Should he do this now?

"Are you hurt?"

"No, I'm fine. I'm fine." He kisses her cheek.

"Do it, then." She tries to sit up, but ends up just leaning into him. He lets her, and takes her hands, orb and all, in his. His hands start to glow, a cool blue glow. His magic, familiar and welcome, runs down her arm and it starts to calm the buzzing inside of her. His casting is silent, and he doesn't move, just furrowing his brow in concentration. The blue mingles with the green of the mark, and flows into and around the orb. The angry green of the breach fades away, leaving calm magic swirling along the surface of the orb.

Solas stops casting, and the orb slips from her hands. It floats above his.

"The magic is home. It was never meant to exist outside the orb." He sounds distant, and she wonders briefly if he will take it and leave.

"Come," he says instead, and they get up together. "Is your hand feeling alright? I would like to test a few things, but it can wait."

"I'm fine." She flexes her hand. "It feels fine. Different. No pain and no... buzzing inside of me."

"Good – here, you're injured." He crouches in front of her, his right hand on her thigh where she is bleeding. His familiar healing washes over her. The orb is floating above his left hand, emitting a subtle teal glow, cool and soothing. It looks like it belongs there.

He gets up, and she leans on him, thankful. They start to walk.

“You were bleeding,” she says.

“I just overspent my mana. It is – not an issue now.”

“We have to tell,” she says. No one will think the orb was ever meant to belong to anyone but Solas. They others also deserve the truth, all of it. They are her friends, and she will not hide this from them.

“Yes,” he says, and then they are down the stairs, and everyone is there. Sera flies into her arms, and Thom hugs her long and fierce. They’re swept up in the relief of celebration, everyone elated and exhausted.

Later, when they are back in Skyhold, Josephine calls a meeting. Everyone files into the War Room, all her companions and advisors. They need to figure out what happens next, to the Inquisition, what is left to do. How to help people. When a new Divine will be selected. How to message the nations of Thedas about Corypheus’ death and the Inquisition’s victory. How to celebrate with everyone in Skyhold. Josie lists everything, and ends with declaring she has already started preparations for a party tonight – dinner for the nobles visiting, food and ale for the soldiers.

“We still have battles to come and much more to do, but for tonight, let us celebrate,” Josephine says. Everyone nods and smiles, filled with relief. Iwyn smiles too, and then looks to Solas. He nods. Better sooner than later.

“We have one more thing to discuss today,” she says.

Iwyn takes the orb from Solas, and places it on the wartable. It stings where she touches it, and it glows faintly.

“The orb.”

“Can we destroy it?” Cassandra asks, and several of the others nod. It is a reasonable question, she supposes.

“No,” Solas says. “It is no longer possible. I was able to remove the Mark from Iwyn’s – from the Inquisitor’s arm, and put the magic back in the orb, so to speak. The orb is impervious.”

“How do you know?” Dorian asks. Iwyn is sure he has realized it must be elvish, or that Solas must know more than he has shared. She takes a step closer to Solas.

“I know because the orb is mine,” he says, his back stiffening. “But I think it is better if I start from the beginning.”

His last words are almost drowned out by everyone asking questions – *how, what do you mean, explain!* Cullen has his hand on his sword, Sera has taken a step forward and Morrigan retreats closer to the door.

“Let him explain,” she says, and she is raising her voice. It comes out sharper than she intended, but it works. Everyone quiets down, and her look makes Cullen raise his hand from his pommel to fold his arms over his chest. “I know the story – some of the story. Solas is not here to harm you,

and neither will the orb.”

Not right now, at least. She remembers his power sweeping the ancient battlefield, but that they don't have to know.

“As I have told you,” Solas begins, “I am an ancient elf, having slept in uthenera for thousands of years. That is not all I am. I am uncertain how well versed you are in Dalish legends, but you must all know of the Creators, the Evanuris that the Dalish revere as gods.”

Everyone nods.

“They are not gods. In short, they were powerful mages who were raised up as such by their own people. They were blinded by their own greed and power as time went on. I was one of them. I am who the Dalish call Fen'Harel, the Dread Wolf.”

Everyone starts speaking at once, confused questions and silent frowns. Iwyn suspects they don't really know what it means. Morrigan might now some of it, and she is leaning against the wall with an unreadable expression on her face. Solas waits until everyone is silent again and then tells his story, much as he told her. How he brought up the veil, and fell into uthenera, and awoke in a strange world. His attempt to unlock the orb, and then tried to let Corypheus do it. His future plans, what chaos it would have brought, and how is no longer sure of them.

“It is your fault, then” Cassandra says. “It is you we should have brought to trial.”

Solas nods. “Do you still intend to?”

Iwyn thinks there might be a challenge in his words, but it doesn't matter. She will not let that happen.

“Do you still mean to destroy the veil? The world?”

Solas sighs, and Iwyn holds her breath. She can feel his distress and she wants to leave, to comfort him, but it is better to get it all over with now.

“No. I do not. The world is... the world has changed. I cannot restore what was, and even if I could, I'm no longer certain that it is desirable. It does not mean I am satisfied with what is in the world now, and that I think the veil is working as it should. But I do not seek to take any action which would not lead to more chaos and suffering”. He looks at everyone. “Besides, I understand a little more of this world, and there are too many... to much which would be destroyed.”

“Friendship, where none were expected. Love. Passion. New things to learn, to understand.” Cole says quietly. “A home away from home.”

“Yes, Cole. I am no longer a stranger here, and the people in this world are no longer strange.” He pauses, choosing his words careful. “To be frank, there are still people I have lost, people who are missed, sleeping, waiting to awaken. I wish for the world to be safe for them to do so.”

Cassandra nods. “You wish to save your people. I understand.”

“Thank you.”

Iwyn can feel him relax, a miniscule change in the set of his shoulders, an easing of his magic. She doubts anyone else notices, but his relief is clear to her. She reaches out, and laces her fingers with his.

With that, the meeting is over, with only a few more brief notes from Josie about the evening's party.

The party is a happy celebration, far too big for something put together in an afternoon. Josephine has managed to organize bright candles and decorations, and the tables are littered with confetti. The food is lavish, and Maryden has already composed a victory song. Iwyn has the sneaking suspicion that this was planned long before victory was certain. She wonders briefly if Josie had planned a funeral too, and decides not to dwell on it.

Throughout the evening, she passes from one table to another, celebrated for her victory. Everyone wants to talk with her, and with her inner circle. She has barely time to see her friends, let alone talk and celebrate with them.

Solas finds her later, when she has disentangled herself from at least five boring conversations with visiting nobles. She might be hiding a bit, on the balcony above the main hall, drinking her wine. She is glad he finds her, and leans into his embrace.

"How are you feeling, *vhenan*?"

I'm... alright. Exhausted. The fight, the party. And... everything." She thinks of the orb, and his power and the looks she's been getting. She looks away.

Solas reaches for her, his hand cupping her face. Then he hesitates.

"Should I leave you alone?"

"No," she says, and she kisses his hand. "You stay here."

"I will," he says, relaxed and happy, and she smiles too.

She steps closer and kiss him. She needs him. It's been a long day, a long fight, but they survived. They rescued the orb and so many things are uncertain, but Solas is here, his hands resting on her hips, his lips on hers. She wants more, closer. She wants to forget the fight or celebrate it is over.

"Someone could see us," he murmurs against her ear. The noise from the party drift up to them, the hall is still full, with no sign of the celebration winding down.

"I don't care," she replies. She'd have him, right here, if she could. She doesn't care about the party anymore. All she can think of is Solas, his hands roaming over her. His lips. The pressure of his thigh against her core. "I should, though. Josie will be disappointed if I cause a scandal, and I think I've doing enough for tonight. Let's leave."

As soon as they are inside their chamber, she pushes him against the wall. The meeting and the party didn't really drain all the adrenaline from her, and every part of her is still screaming that they're alive, alive, alive. Solas is alive and real against her, his tunic rough and his lips soft and

giving. She bites them to hear him groan, and the sound goes straight to her core. His hips bucks against hers, and he is hard, as turned on as she is. She needs this. She needs to know he wants her, that she can have him, even as the power she wielded is gone, trapped inside the orb only he controls.

She slowly, deliberately, trail her fingers up his broad chest, and down his solid arms. She closes her hands over his wrists, pushing his hands from her ass to the wall, keeping them there, as she still kisses him.

He lets her, giving in with deeper groans. He still pushes against her, trying to get closer, but he does not move his hands, or try to take control. Instead he kisses her deeper, pressing his hips to her, his hardness rubbing against her.

“Twyn, *vhenan*, please.” he says, his eyes dark.

“I want you, Solas. I want all of you.”

It’s the right thing to say, and the truth. She wants Solas, all and everything that she knows of him now, his power, his past and his future. He kisses her harder, and strains against her grip, his nails scraping the stone wall. He bites her lip in turn.

“Against the wall?” he asks, rough and low.

She shakes her head. “Bed. And naked.” They’ve won, and they’ve time. Solas chuckles and nods. She lets go of his wrists, and puts one hand in his, and pulls him across the room.

They undress themselves and each other, kissing and touching as they go. She can’t keep her hands off his smooth skin when he pulls his shirt off, she can’t keep her lips from his freckled chest and pink nipples. She needs to touch, to taste, to be close. He repays the favor when she pulls down her pants, his hands roaming over her ass, squeezing and caressing.

Naked, they fall into bed, still touching each other. Everything is soft and warm and naked skin and roaming hands. She’s wrapped up in him, and it feels like coming home, more than the bed, and the room, and the victory. It’s what she yearns for. It’s the only thing that matters.

They touch and her need grows, and she pushes his head down her body, down between her legs where she wants him. Solas looks at her, his eyes burning, and he kisses her inner thigh, sending lightning down her legs. Her toes curl and her hands grasp. She has no idea if he uses actual magic, or if all the sensations are conjured by his lips on her skin. He reaches the top of her thigh and he keeps moving, featherlight kisses until he finally puts his lips on her sex. She tilts her hips to encourage him, she needs him closer, more, anything to relieve her aching need.

He doesn’t disappoint, sucking and licking, moving his skillful tongue around and across her clit, and down below. It’s a blur of sensations, moans and need and release, soon she is jerking against his face, holding him in place, though he is not interested in going anywhere else.

She eases her grip as she comes down, and Solas pulls back, but just a little. He is still licking and sucking, more gently now. Her every nerve is on fire, and she keeps shuddering with every touch to her sensitive skin. He adds and removes pressure, and she wants him to continue, to stop, everything a sensitive messy blur.

Finally, she tugs on his ear until he stops, and she pulls him up and close. She doesn’t care she can taste herself on his lips. She wants him. He obliges, and groans into her mouth.

After revealing his true name earlier today, he held himself a little back, proud and remote like in

Arlathan, to fulfill the role as Fen'Harel, The Dread Wolf, no matter that people didn't know much. They knew just enough to make him fall into the role he assumed for himself, or was foisted upon him. Enough to make him wary and hide behind his mask. Not here, here he is just Solas, scholar, lover and hers. This is who she loves, and this is what makes her heart sing for their future.

His eyes are filled with love and desire, and it's all hers.

"I want you, Solas. I want you." She runs her hands down his back. "I love you. *Ar lath ma.*"

"*Ar lath math*, Iwyn," he replies, and he enters her in one deep stroke.

He moves slowly, his eyes locked with hers. She clutches his shoulders, her legs wrapped around his hip, wanting him closer and deeper. He feels so good inside of her, and she tells him.

Solas groans and moves faster, and she encourages him, her fingers digging into his shoulders. She kisses what she can reach, his throat, his chest.

"Iwyn, I can't – I'm –"

"Let go, Solas, let go." She will take what he can give, her sex swollen and sensitive from the earlier attention of his mouth, and she is ready for him.

His hips snaps against hers, his eyes closed in deep pleasure, as he shudders and falls over his edge. A few short strokes later he collapses on top of her, into her arms.

"I love you," she mumbles, stroking his back. "I love you, Solas."

He answers back in kind.

The next morning, Iwyn wakes first. Solas is sleeping peacefully, and with a small smile she gets up and walks to the balcony. The sky is painted pink and gold by the sunrise. She stands there, breathing in the sunrise and the peace. No Breach, no Mark.

A little while later she hears Solas behind her, his bare feet crossing the floor. He wraps his arms, and a blanket, around her.

"What now?" she asks.

"I don't know," he says, and kisses the top of her head. "But no matter what may come, we will face it together."

She leans back into him, and together they watch a new day begin.

Chapter End Notes

And then they lived happily ever after.

~

Thank you everyone for reading and cheering me on. It has been such a project for me to see this tale to the end, and I'm glad you did it too.

I'm sorry for the wait between chapters, especially this last one. The pandemic disrupted my day to day and has at times left me drained of energy to create, but not entirely. I worked bit by bit until I was done. I hope you and yours are all safe.

Thanks to Galadrieljones for her ever-present encouragement. <3

End Notes

This is written as a one shot, but I ended up writing a full story. I hope you enjoy!

Feel free to stop by my [tumblr](#)!

Please [drop by the archive and comment](#) to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!